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for best mortgage

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'DISGRACED BRICE MUST STEP DOWN'

KERB-crawling councillor Nick Brice is facing calls to resign after it emerged he was cautioned for attempting to pick up a prostitute.



NICK BRICE

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

Yourmedway was first to reveal that the Rochester South and Horsted ward representative was arrested scouring working girls on the streets of Rochester in November, last year.

The disgraced councillor admitted the

offence and received a conditional caution. Medway Conservatives immediately moved to expel Cllr Brice from the party, saying all elected members should uphold "the highest standards in public office and public life".

The 64-year-old, of Maidstone Road, Chatham, has ignored phone calls and emails sent by this paper asking whether he will continue to serve as an Independent or stand down.

The uncertainty has led Medway's Labour group to call for his resignation. Party leader Cllr Paul Godwin said: "When a person who holds public

office breaks the law, they generally have the decency to resign. When they have been caught kerb-crawling, any right-minded person would do the decent thing. The Tories were correct to throw Cllr Brice out and I'm amazed he hasn't resigned.

"His position is untenable. If he doesn't attend meetings for six months he automatically ceases to be a member, but if he does appear he will find himself in front of the standards committee. He cannot be allowed to just ignore the situation."

Cllr Teresa Murray, of neighbouring Rochester East ward, said: "I'm sure

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



PROUD OF PARIS

Four-year-old Paris smiles with pride after being honoured by paramedics for helping save her pregnant mother's life.

The youngster came to the aid of mum Laura Ditch, after she suffered an epileptic fit at their Gillingham home.

Laura, who was 36 weeks gone with son Tyrese, said: "I remember getting her ready for school and then nothing until waking up in A&E.

"I'm very proud she knew what to do, otherwise I would have had to wait until my partner got home from work, which could have been hours."

"It's a worry that this could happen when we're alone again, especially with a new little one, but Paris has shown she knows what to do."

FOR MORE, SEE PAGE 3



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Hooded raider strikes in sixth gun robbery at bookmakers

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

THIS hooded man is being hunted in connection with a series of raids on Medway bookmakers.

The man is now thought to have committed six raids on betting shops across the towns, with the latest taking place on Monday night.

He entered the William Hill shop in High Street, Strood, at 8.45pm armed with what appeared to be a gun wrapped in a plastic bag and demanded money from staff.

Police are linking this robbery with four similar crimes carried dating back to November, last year.

CCTV footage of one robbery shows a hooded man entering a bookmakers carrying what appears to be a firearm.

He points the weapon at a member of staff as he strides up to the counter, passing two terrified customers.

The robber then hands a blue plastic carrier bag to the worker and forces him to fill it with cash.

He then flees the scene.

Detective Inspector Ann Lisserman said: "We believe the man responsible for this latest robbery in Snodland may also hold information in relation to the other offences in November and December.



WHO IS HE?: Hooded robber in disguise

"I urge anyone with information to contact Kent Police immediately. Fortunately no-one has been injured in any of these incidents, but staff have been shaken."

The man is aged between 20 and 30 years and is about 6ft tall.

He was wearing a light green parka with a furry collar, light coloured jeans, sunglasses and brown shoes during all the robberies.

The Association of British Bookmakers has put up a reward for any information leading to the arrest of the offender.

Call the police on 01634 792567 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 if you can help.

yourmedway
NEWS IN BRIEF

Teenagers face crack and cannabis charges

FOUR teenagers have been charged with possessing crack cocaine and cannabis.

The four – including three Medway youngsters – will now appear before Medway Youth Court.

A 17-year-old Londoner, who cannot be named for legal reasons, faces the most serious charge after being caught with crack in the Globe Lane car park, Chatham, in November.

The Medway teenagers, aged 16 and 17 – who cannot be named for legal reasons – and Jack Mooney, 18, of Moor Park Close, Rainham, have all been charged with possession of Class B drugs with intent to supply and will go to court on February 2.

Firm denies failing to disinfect Kent water

SOUTHERN Water has been taken to court accused of supplying inadequately disinfected water to areas of Kent.

The company, which serves two million homes, is charged with three counts of failing to prepare water properly at its Matts Hill treatment works, near Sittingbourne.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate says the infringements occurred in November 2008. A representative pleaded not guilty to all three charges when he appeared before Medway magistrates on behalf of the company on Thursday. A date for trial will be fixed on Thursday, January 28.

Burning a bigger hole

A LITTERBUG has been ordered to pay £200 after throwing a cigarette butt out of a parked car.

Tom McDonagh, of Ordnance Street, Chatham, was caught littering in a fast food car park on the Medway City Estate by environmental officers.

The 20-year-old was handed an £80 fine for the June offence.

When McDonagh failed to pay the fixed penalty notice he was called before Medway magistrates.

The bench ordered him to pay a total of £200, £140 more than he would have paid had he settled within ten days.

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Brutal fugitive jailed after 13 years on run

A FUGITIVE who fled to California after savagely attacking his estranged wife and her new partner has been jailed after 13 years on the run.

Jaswinder Rana was extradited back to the UK after Kent Police – working with the US Marshals Service and Immigration and Customs Enforcement – discovered the former Gillingham resident had been living in hiding in a Sikh community in San Jose.

He has now been jailed for 14 years after pleading guilty to the attempted murder of Amar Sandhu and to causing grievous bodily harm with intent to his ex-wife Kirpal Rana, in March 1996.

Respect

Speaking exclusively to KOS Media, Det Insp Gavin Moss said the hefty sentence should act as a warning to others that the police will never give up on a case.

He said: "We are very committed to investigating serious crimes, no matter how much time has passed, and this is a very satisfying outcome for both us and the victims.

"I have the utmost respect for his victims because this was clearly a very difficult offence for them to potentially have to relive, but thankfully Rana saw sense and pleaded guilty to his crimes."

Rana, 56, attacked his ex-wife and her new partner with a "bladed instrument" following

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

an angry confrontation in Kelly Drive, Gillingham.

Both of his victims were left seriously injured, and the boyfriend confined to a wheelchair. They both also suffered head trauma, with Mr Sandhu losing much of the use of his right hand.

Rana fled the country before police could arrest him for the crimes, and despite believing he had set up home in Paris, the trail quickly turned cold.

That all changed when detectives conducted a review of the case in late 2007.

DI Moss said: "As the review progressed we were able to establish that there was a very large Sikh community living in the San Jose area of California.

"We made contact with the US embassy in London, who offered us enormous assistance. We were able to find out he was living there under the assumed identity of Suchet Singh.

"It may have been quite a lucky break, but at the end of the day we had to explore all possibilities because he could have been anywhere in the world.

"It turned out to be an opportunity that was well worth investigating."

DI Moss also praised the Crown Prosecution Service for the help it gave the police in bringing Rana to justice.

Rana was sentenced at the Old Bailey on Friday, January 15.



JAILED: Jaswinder Rana was extradited to the UK and admitted attempted murder after being found in California

Kerb-crawler 'must resign from council'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE
everyone in Rochester and Medway is disgusted by Nicholas Brice's actions.

"For him to be cautioned for kerb-crawling when the council, police and NHS are working to combat prostitution is disgraceful.

"I'm sure people in Rochester South do not want to be represented by a kerb-crawler.

"He may have been arrogant enough to think he could get away with this in Medway, but surely he can't be so arrogant to think he can continue as a councillor?"

Medway Council leader Cllr Rodney Chambers announced that the Conservatives had expelled Cllr Brice from the party last Wednesday.

In a statement, Cllr Chambers said: "The leader and members of the Conservative group believe all elected members should uphold the highest standards in public office and public life.

"A serious matter has arisen concerning Cllr Brice's private conduct and the Conservative group has taken the decision to expel Cllr Brice from membership."

Should Cllr Brice resign, it will trigger a by-election in the ward.

Paris, 4, praised for coming to the aid of pregnant mum

A FOUR-year-old girl has been praised by paramedics after coming to the aid of her pregnant mum.

Paris Ditch raised the alarm on Wednesday, December 2 when mum Laura – who was 36 weeks pregnant – suffered an epileptic fit at their Gillingham home.

Paris, who has never been alone when Laura has previously suffered an episode, rushed to her mum's aid and tried to break her fall.

She then called her grandmother, Karen Ditch.

Proud Karen said: "Paris told me that mummy had fallen and that she couldn't wake her up. I got on to another phone and called 999."

Medway paramedics Ken Wallace and Chris Billett, who responded to the emergency, were keen to see Paris recognised for her bravery.

Ken said: "Paris did very well to raise the alarm and get the help her mum needed."

"This highlights how important it is for parents to teach their children what to do in an emergency."



BRAVE: Paris Ditch meets paramedics with her mum Laura and her new brother Tyrese

Laura was taken to Medway Maritime Hospital where she stayed for a few days as a precaution. She gave birth to a baby boy, Tyrese, a week later.

Grandmother Karen added: "We are immensely proud of Paris. This affected her for quite a while afterwards and it is so lovely that the ambulance service has recognised what she did on that day for her mum."

Power faults leave families in the cold

FURIOUS residents have blasted an energy firm after power to their homes was cut off three times in a week – because of a "difficult to pinpoint" fault.

Homeowners described utility company EDF Energy as "incompetent" after they were hit by blackouts amid freezing conditions in Rochester Street, Chatham.

They said they were worried the problem would not be rectified, leaving them living in fear of more outages.

Laura Welsh, who lives Rochester Street with her partner and young daughter, said: "It's really bad – I can't believe it's happened again.

"They're not doing anything to sort the problem out. I'm having to pay to get the train to go and stay with my mum – it's a nightmare."

"I want to know what is being done because we can't live like this."

Another resident, who did not wish to be named, added: "If this happens again I want to know if EDF will pay for the food that has gone off in the fridge."

EDF Energy apologised to customers for both faults and said the fault had been difficult to pinpoint.

A spokesman said: "We do understand how difficult it is being without electricity, and would like to apologise to customers for the inconvenience caused."

"The problems may have been caused by an intermittent fault on our low voltage underground network which has been difficult to pinpoint. This can occur when heat produced at the time of the fault reseals the cable meaning that no permanent fault is evident."

"We would like to thank customers for their understanding while we carried out this work."

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Council wants your view on planned regeneration

PROPOSALS to extend Rochester's conservation area will be put to the public for feedback.

The plans would see the Esplanade and waterfront included in the protected zone.

Medway Council's economic growth boss Jane Chitty said: "It is important everyone in Medway benefits from the area's regeneration and we are always keen to hear residents' views on the proposed plans."

See the plans at 95 Rochester High Street.

World's biggest wildlife survey is just childs play

YOUNG bird-lovers have the chance to take part in the world's biggest wildlife survey.

The RSPB's annual count will see pupils from all over the country record the birds they see on their playgrounds.

Media officer Sophie McCallum said: "The Big Schools' Birdwatch provides an opportunity children to discover more about the birds visiting their schools."

The study runs until February 1. For more information visit www.rspb.org.uk.

Councillors prove to be a sound bunch for guides

THE 5th Rainham North Guides group has bought a new sound system thanks to a £300 cash donation by ward councillors.

Delighted unit leader Paula Sharp said: "We have been struggling with an antiquated sound system and will be able to use the new one in future meetings. We will also be able to purchase camping equipment."

Tory councillors Barry Kemp, Rehman Chishti and Mike O'Brien delivered the equipment on Wednesday, January 13.

Kind-hearted building society's £600 donation

KIND-HEARTED customers helped raise more than £600 for the British Heart Foundation as part of Yorkshire Building Society's nationwide Heart to Heart appeal.

The cash was raised at their Chatham branch as the result of a host of Christmas fundraising activities.

The campaign saw £301 raised through sales, a figure that was matched by YBS.

A total of £115,000 was raised nationwide helping the the BHF's vital work.

Vow captain's death 'will not be in vain'

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

A BOMB disposal expert has been killed while serving in Afghanistan.

Captain Daniel Read, a former Rainham Mark Grammar School pupil, died after an explosion went off in the Musa Qaleh area of northern Helmand province on Monday, January 11.

The 31-year-old's widow, Lorraine Read, paid tribute to her late husband.

She said: "Dan was so brave, he was my hero and best friend, he was a loving husband, son, brother, uncle and friend."

"He will never be forgotten and always in my heart. I'm so proud and privileged to have been your wife."

Passionate

Capt Read joined the Corps of Royal Engineers in 1996, after completing his GCSEs in Medway.

He rose through the ranks from sapper to high threat improvised explosive device disposal operator, a role he took up in August of last year. He was immediately put to use on the front line.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: "Capt Read was an experienced operator. He attended 21 tasks in Afghanistan, and had already dealt with 32 IEDs."

"Captain Read was passionate about his role as a explosive device disposal operator, always displaying a boundless enthusiasm and energy for the tasks he undertook."

Lieutenant Colonel Gareth Bex RLC, Commanding Officer, Counter-IED Task Force

and 11 EOD Regiment RLC, added: "Dan Read was filled with a zest for life, and I found him instantly likeable when I first met him in November, 2008.

"He epitomised the values of selfless commitment, loyalty and deep-seated courage.

"Such was his professionalism and determination that even an injury sustained in a bomb blast in October, 2009 could not keep him away for more than two months and he returned to theatre in December, 2009 as soon as his injuries were healed.

"Despite the inherent dangers, Dan was determined to return to Afghanistan; he had a job to finish and a team to rejoin. My thoughts go out to Lou, his wife, who was Dan's rock."

"His return after injury is but one example that could be used to illustrate Dan's tremendous physical and mental courage.

"For those who knew him you simply had to see the cheeky grin or hear him say 'no dramas' in the face of a daunting task to know that nothing could faze him.

"A natural leader, Dan was well respected and held in deep affection by his men.

"He led by example, loved working in the close-knit community that is typical of the improvised explosive device disposal teams, and would have done anything for his men."

"I am proud and honoured to have been the commanding officer of a man of Dan's calibre. His death will not be in vain; we will see to that."



LEADER OF MEN: Captain Dan Read, a former pupil at Rainham Mark Grammar School, was killed in Afghanistan

Woman in court for breaking Asbo

A NUISANCE neighbour has been handed a 30-day suspended sentence after breaching her court-imposed anti-social behaviour order.

Eileen Hutton, formerly of Nortcote Road, Strood, had been given the five-year ASBO in September of last year, after causing persistent problems in her neighbourhood.

The troublemaker was hauled before Medway Magistrates Court just three months into the order after causing a disturbance, shouting and using abusive language.

She was sentenced to 30 days behind bars, suspended for 12 months.

Magistrates also gave Hutton a 12-month supervision order and ordered her to undertake

six months of alcohol treatment.

Hutton's partner, Robin Taylor, also appeared at Medway Magistrates Court following a harassment charge.

He was given a restraining order prohibiting him from entering Northcote Road and preventing him from contacting, directly or indirectly, anyone named on the restraining order.

The order will remain in place until December 2014.

Anti-social behaviour officer Peter Jackson said: "We will not hesitate to take enforcement action against the minority of people whose unacceptable behaviour adversely affects the quality of life for people who live and work in the Medway towns."



TROUBLE: Eileen Hutton breached order

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KILLER: Deke Partridge (left) denied killing close friend Tim Hutcheon (right) who died from ten stab wounds

14 years for man who stabbed his friend to death

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

MURDERER Deke Partridge has been jailed for life after being found guilty of stabbing close friend Tim Hutcheon to death.

The 27-year-old launched the frenzied attack at his victim's Chatham bungalow in January of last year.

Concern was raised for Tim, 34, when he failed to make contact with family and friends.

Police found his body lying on a bed in his Dale Street home. He had been stabbed ten times.

Partridge, who was known to regularly carry a knife, was arrested in February on suspicion of murder, a charge he has always denied.

He was convicted on Friday following a trial at Maidstone Crown Court.

On sentencing, the judge said Partridge would serve a minimum of 14 years before being considered for parole.

Sympathy

Outside court Tim's mother Jennifer Langley said: "Tim was at home and should have been safe in his bungalow; he opened the door to someone he considered a friend with devastating consequences.

"As a family we can feel no elation today, as nothing can compensate us for losing Tim.

"We have each been given a lifetime of loss and sadness and while each of us, in our own way, will learn to live with these emotions nothing will ever take them away.

Deke Partridge was walking around the streets of Medway carrying a knife and if Tim hadn't been the victim it may well have been someone else.

"We owe a great deal to our close family, friends and a brilliant police team who have helped us through this time.

"Members of Deke's family have taken the time to speak with us and express their sympathy; to them we are also grateful.

"We never wanted this trial to be about our family versus anyone else as both families have suffered deeply because of this tragedy.

"In the meantime we shall continue to



MURDER SCENE: Hutcheon died at home in Dale Street

remember Tim and endeavour to rebuild our lives in the knowledge that the jury reached the correct verdict."

During questioning by Kent Police's major crime unit Partridge admitted visiting Tim's bungalow on January 26, but claimed he walked away when no-one came to the door.

Partridge also later admitted to five people that he had carried out the attack, but during cross-examination stated this was all lies.

Detective Chief Inspector Mick Atkinson said: "This was a tragic incident involving two men who were known to each other and were considered to be friends.

"It has been a difficult time for everyone involved in this case, and I must thank Tim's family for their cooperation throughout the investigation and subsequent trial.

"I am pleased the correct verdict has been reached, but that offers little consolation to the family who have lost a much loved son and brother.

Deke Partridge carried out this brutal attack and has been rightly sentenced for the crime. We do not know if he will ever fully admit to the offence or reveal the reasons why he decided to kill Tim Hutcheon.

"Fortunately, incidents such as this are extremely rare in Kent and Medway.

"This result is a clear indication that those who carry out violent attacks, especially with weapons such as knives, can face very severe consequences."

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yourmedway NEWS IN BRIEF

Murdered OAP is named

THE murdered man whose body was found in a Chatham flat has been named as Antoine Denis.

Mr Denis, 66, was discovered in his home in Copperfield House, New Road, at 10.45pm on Saturday, January 9.

He died from a single stab wound.

Two men have been arrested on suspicion of murder. A 69-year-old from Chatham was arrested on January 11 and released on police bail while investigations continue. A 43-year-old from Chatham was arrested on January 14. He has also been released on police bail.

Area Commander for Kent Police in Medway, Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishley said: "Officers are following a number of lines of inquiry in relation to this investigation."

Call police on 01634 884011 or Kent CrimeStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Councillor's Haiti fund run

TORY councillor Rehman Chishti will take part in a half-marathon next month to raise money for victims of Haiti earthquake.

The Rainham central representative, a candidate for the Gillingham and Rainham parliamentary seat, will take on the 13-mile Dover race on February 14.

Clr Chishti said: "Having lost my grandfather and close relatives in the Kashmir Earthquake in 2005, it is vital we help fund the various support campaigns being set up."

To sponsor the councillor send an email to rehman@rehmchishti.com.

Click fix for a happier you

A WEBSITE focussing on improving mental well-being has been launched by NHS bosses.

The online guide offers practical advice to boost happiness, including a mental 'five-a-day' and Dr Tim's 23 tips for becoming happier.

Mental health chief Lauretta Kavanagh said: "What is so useful about this site is it brings together local information to promote people's emotional well-being. It is a really outstanding idea and I hope people will make use of it, post up their own ideas, activities, stories and blogs to make it even more useful."

For more information visit www.liveitwell.org.uk.

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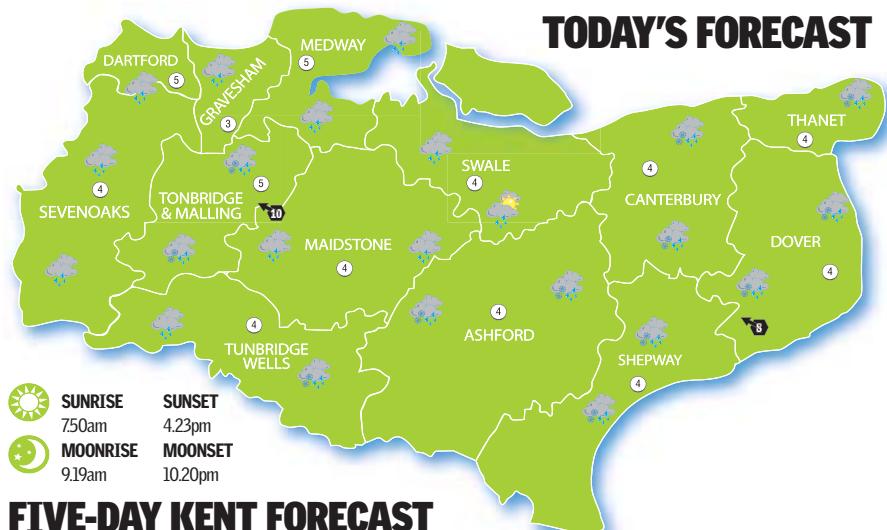
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WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	5:38pm	5.1m
	Sunday	6:35pm	4.9m
Dover	Saturday	3:42pm	5.6m
	Sunday	4:45pm	5.4m
Dungeness	Saturday	3:53pm	6.5m
	Sunday	4:58pm	6.2m
Ramsgate	Saturday	4:12pm	4.3m
	Sunday	5:15pm	4.1m
Sheerness	Saturday	5:27pm	5.0m
	Sunday	6:23pm	4.8m
Whitstable	Saturday	5:15pm	4.7m
	Sunday	6:12pm	4.5m

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	7°C	4°C	6°C	9°C	7°C	Gravesend	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C
Canterbury	7°C	4°C	5°C	8°C	5°C	Maidstone	7°C	5°C	6°C	10°C	7°C
Chatham	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C	Ramsgate	7°C	4°C	5°C	8°C	5°C
Dartford	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C	Rochester	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C
Dover	6°C	4°C	5°C	8°C	5°C	Sevenoaks	6°C	3°C	4°C	8°C	5°C
Faversham	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C	Sittingbourne	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C
Folkestone	6°C	4°C	5°C	8°C	5°C	Tonbridge	7°C	3°C	6°C	9°C	6°C
Gillingham	7°C	5°C	6°C	9°C	7°C	Tun Wells	7°C	3°C	6°C	9°C	6°C

AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	3°C	Madrid	12°C
Athens	11°C	New York	3°C
Barcelona	11°C	Paris	4°C
Beijing	-1°C	Rome	9°C
Bombay	30°C	Sydney	24°C
Cape Town	24°C	Tenerife	28°C
Cardiff	9°C	Tokyo	7°C
Gibraltar	16°C	Vancouver	10°C
Hong Kong	20°C	Warsaw	-2°C
Las Palmas	23°C	Wellington	16°C

Brad blows BT business award judges away

ONLINE entrepreneur Bradley McGloughlin overcame hundreds of wannabe millionaire moguls to win a national small business award.

Mr McGloughlin, from Rochester, blew BT Business essence of entrepreneur judges away with his web sales company Trading4u.

The firm sells goods worth £75 or over – from designer handbags to leather sofas – on sites such as eBay and Amazon on their owners' behalf.

Judges said they were impressed with Mr McGloughlin's innovation and success.

The Trading4u boss, said: "It's a fantastic achievement and great recognition my business is a brilliant new idea.

"I feel this will further develop Trading4u's brand and will show consumers and businesses that Trading4u is a recognised company for delivering an excellent new service."

Twenty winners were selected nationwide.

Head judge Peter Jones, one of the panelists on BBC1's Dragond Den, said: "The winners are bucking the trend, harnessing the developments of technology and thriving.

"I was massively impressed with the standard of entries, and the diversity of the entrepreneurs."



INTERNET TRADER:
Bradley McGloughlin

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QUESTION & ANSWER

MAGGIE OSBORN



Q & A

The talented artist talks to **Mathew Beech** about working at Chatham's New Arts Centre, her fascination with portraiture, avant-garde theatre and the genius of painter Lucian Freud

Q Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

A I am a practising artist in Kent. My art has evolved over the years and I recently moved back into a studio space at the New Arts Centre – Nucleus Arts – in Chatham.

I'm a qualified theatre designer who graduated from the Rose Bruford College in Sidcup.

I enjoyed working in theatre because of the variety – it's art with a technical slant.

It's challenging work with constraints such as budget and cast.

Q Can you describe your art style?

A I work in all mediums but usually with oils. However, I particularly enjoy drawing. My work is mainly figurative and drawing from life is something I really enjoy.

I used to sculpt but am fairly limited with my work environment to be able to continue. This is allowing me to concentrate on canvas. I featured in the local press before with a sculpture for a project in the West End and I have had exhibitions in London and the south east.

Q What do you do in your free time?

A I go to the theatre a lot. The last production I saw was Bertolt Brecht's Mother Courage at the National Theatre.

Each time I have seen the production it's

been staged quite differently.

I like avant-garde productions, more so than the larger set-piece productions staged in the West End. I remember seeing a production about an Eastern European family and at the end the cast all made a choreographed figure to look like a crocodile – the play was called Street of Crocodiles – that was very imaginative.

I love art exhibitions, the National Portrait Gallery is a favourite, and I make a habit of popping into local exhibitions. I also travel a lot. I go to Australia at least once a year to see family.

South America is on my list – one day. My cousin was working in Mexico last year and the pictures she painted were like an Isabel Allende novel – a favourite author of mine.

If an opportunity arose, I'd love to visit South America.

Q What advice would you give aspiring artists?

A Be true to yourself and to work through your styles. Endeavouring to keep your work alive and refreshed is a good ethos to work with.

I still go to life drawing classes when I can, just to have a new environment and different models to be inspired by.

But enjoying what you do is the bedrock for success. I could never be Damien Hirst – picking isn't my idea of fun.

Q Who or what has been the biggest influence on you?

A I grew up in a small village in Essex which was largely a farming community. That, combined with a strong interest in politics and literature were – and still are – a great influence on how I approach my work.

The Eastern influences from post-revolutionary Russia and iconography and Islamic or Moorish architecture are the styles I admire most. In addition, the Portrait Gallery has me spellbound. I love to see artwork with a personality shining out at me.

In my opinion, Lucian Freud is probably the greatest living artist for the human body and its realism. It is not a flattering portrayal of how the body is. I first saw his artwork at an exhibition in the Whitechapel Gallery in the early 1990s and was enthralled.

Q What would you be doing if you weren't doing this?

A I like history and politics, so if I were not an artist I may have taught or entered politics in a broader sense, but that would be only as the last resort because I find indulging in art is my passion. I still enjoy putting pencil to paper or paint to canvas.

Q Any final comments?

A My website is www.osoarty.co.uk which has some recent works illustrated on it.

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Award Winning Company

A hole load of expensive trouble for KCC after heavy snow

COUNTY Hall is bracing itself for a torrent of compensation claims linked to the hundreds of potholes forming on Kent's roads.

Motorists forced to pay out for puncture and suspension damage repairs are expected to flood the council's mailbags with demands that the authority should foot the bill, at a potential cost to the taxpayer of tens of thousands of pounds.

The lengthy cold snap has left many of the county's major routes in a state of disrepair, with the potholes creating yet

another hazard for road-users already long fed up with the earlier snow and ice.

Last week KCC was forced to pay out £6,250 to Welling resident Kenneth Atkinson, who suffered a badly-dislocated shoulder after falling from his bicycle in May 2007.

The 76-year-old has since been forced to give up his hobby following the pothole encounter, for which the council initially denied liability.

Mr Atkinson's lawyer Paul Kitson, partner at Russell Jones

and Walker, said: "This case illustrates the difficulties in obtaining compensation from highway authorities.

"They rarely admit liability for accidents involving road defects and it is usually necessary to issue court proceedings.

"The claim was delayed due to arguments between KCC and its third-party contractors [Scotia Gas Networks]. The pothole in question had been repaired previously, but at the time of Mr Atkinson's accident it was five feet long and four inches deep."

The severity of the pothole problem became clear on Tuesday when at least eight drivers had to pull over on the M20 after suffering punctures to their tyres as a result of a particularly deep one.

To make a claim, visit the roads and transport section of www.kent.gov.uk and click on 'fault reporting' followed by 'claims for damage'.

• **Would we all be better off driving 4x4s in the county? See this week's Yourblogger on page 14.**

Police admit illegal stop and searching

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

KENT Police have admitted using stop-and-search powers illegally in what could prove a landmark case for Kingsnorth Climate Camp protestors.

Lawyers representing Chief Constable Mike Fuller told the High Court the force accepted that its officers wrongfully searched at least three demonstrators – including 11-year-old twins – who attended the summer 2008 rally.

They also admitted that an unspecified number of other protestors could have been unlawfully stopped, potentially opening the door for further legal action to be brought against the police.

Hundreds of similar cases are already going through the system, with one lawyer describing the cost to the taxpayer as potentially "staggering".

However, Mr Fuller's representative Richard Perks told the two High Court judges it was not accepted that the police had secretly applied a blanket unlawful stop-and-search policy at the camp.

He said there had been a "clear and lawful" policy and that the huge majority of those stopped had not been done so illegally but accepted there had been "a misapplication of a clear policy by officers on the ground".



POLICE UNDER FIRE: Demonstrators at Kingsnorth have always claimed the police response to the protest was disproportionate to the threat posed by activists

Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 states that officers must have "reasonable suspicion" that an individual is carrying prohibited weapons or articles that could be used for criminal damage before they are stopped and searched.

Mr Perks added that while guidance given to individual officers was correct and accurate, "on occasions it was misapplied in practice".

The announcement came just hours after the European Court of Human Rights ruled it illegal for police to use terror laws to stop and search people without grounds for suspicion.

Home Secretary Alan Johnson said he was disappointed with the decision and would

appeal against it.

The environmental rally at Kingsnorth in summer 2008 was over E.ON's plans to build a new coal-fired power station, which the company put on hold for up to three years last October.

Politicians, protestors and academics involved in the demonstration have always claimed the police response was disproportionate to the threat posed by the activists.

Officers were also accused of being heavy-handed with the campaigners, seizing hundreds of personal items including soap and board games.

They also took a clown's wig, crayons and highlighter pens belonging to the twin children involved in last week's High Court hearing.

The judges heard how one of the youngsters – who cannot be named for legal reasons – was left "crying and shaking" after a female officer said he had to be searched.

He feared he would "go to prison" because he had stickers in his bag which other people had had confiscated.

Long-standing environmental campaigner David Morris, from north London, was also at the court and said he was forcibly searched against his will.

All three are seeking judicial review into police powers and potential damages.

The case has been adjourned while further evidence is considered before a settlement is reached or a full court hearing called for.

Kent Police declined to comment.



JOB INTERVIEW: Mike Fuller was questioned by MPs

Fuller puts himself forward as head of Prosecution Service

KENTS Chief Constable Michael Fuller has told MPs why he believes he should be appointed the next head of the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Fuller – who is Britain's first black police chief – has been selected by Attorney General Baroness Scotland as the preferred candidate to replace current Chief Inspector Stephen Wooler, whose contract at the CPS expires at the end of March.

An announcement regarding Mr Fuller's future is due to be made tomorrow (Thursday).

Last week he told members of the House of Commons justice committee why he thought he was a more suitable choice for the role than a former judge or lawyer.

Experience

He said: "While I don't have knowledge of the day-to-day work of a crown prosecutor, I still bring a lot of knowledge of the system and experience of being a stockholder of the CPS."

"I have experience of running organisations and police departments successfully."

Mr Fuller told the committee that adjusting to policy changes and providing value for money represented two of the biggest challenges for the Chief Inspector of the CPS but that he was fully prepared to cope with both.

He also refuted a suggestion by Sleaford and North Hykeham MP Douglas Hogg that the police and CPS had an "incestuous" relationship and were too closely linked for one to be scrutinised by the other.

Mr Fuller said: "Decision-making has always been independent and I think the public would see me as someone who would bring objectivity and scrutiny where it's needed."

"You need a certain degree of knowledge of the CPS and how it works, and more importantly of the rubbing points. I've seen them first-hand and can therefore make recommendations that are credible."

Mr Fuller joined Kent Police as Chief Constable in January 2004, having previously been with the Met since starting as a cadet in 1975.

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BREAK TIME
Young chefs get set to cook up a storm

Three trainee chefs have made it through to the regional finals of a top student cookery competition.

MidKent College youngsters Michael Ellis, Christopher Davies and Chantelle Goodearl were selected by judges from 65 teams entered across 38 colleges nationwide.

The trio, all studying hospitality and catering at the college's state-of-the-art Gillingham campus, will now battle it out for a place in the national finals at the Kent heat, with the wannabe chefs entering the kitchen on Sunday.

Brakes Student Team Chef Challenge judges included Martin Bates CEO, The Craft Guild of Chefs, and Mark Irish, head of Brakes development chef department.

The judging panel officially revealed its list of regional finalists in late December, stating that it had been "incredibly impressed" with the standard of this year's entries.



TASTE OF SUCCESS: Culinary skills on display

SEND your schools news and pictures to yourmedway@kosmedia.co.uk. You can also upload your video clips of schools events on to www.yourkenttv.co.uk

■ BY MATTHEW BEECH

THE University of Kent has signed a multi-million pound deal to help fund sports development within Medway.

University bosses put pen to paper on the £3million agreement before Christmas.

The deal will help fund the complete redevelopment of the Black Lion Leisure Centre, Gillingham, which is set to re-open as the Medway Park sporting centre of excellence next year.

The university's Professor Julia Goodfellow said the development was an exciting prospect, not just for the university but for the Medway region as a whole.

"It's a proud moment to look around and see the world-class sports facilities we are helping to establish here in Medway," she said.

"It's also a tribute to the great partnership we have with Medway Council.

"But while it's a significant milestone for the university, it's equally important that the new centre will lie at the heart of the community and bring direct benefits to residents, both now and for many years to come."

Medway Park will house specialist facilities for the university's centre of sports studies, including a rehabilitation gym, seminar and events rooms, swimming pools and a dance studio.

There will also be a commercial sports injury clinic, which will give students the opportunity to treat their own clients under the supervision of professional staff.



REAL DEAL: Professor Julia Goodfellow celebrates the University of Kent's agreement to help fund Medway Park

Professor Louis Passfield said Medway Park would help Kent consolidate its position as one of the fastest-growing academic sports departments in the country.

He said: "The facilities here will further enhance the student experience, our teaching and our research programmes, and allow us to attract the very best applicants."

The £11million Medway Park facility is due

to open formally next year and is expected to be one of the country's most advanced training grounds, featuring sports science laboratories, health and fitness suites, swimming pools and an eight-lane athletics track.

It is hoped that athletes from across the globe will use the centre as the base for the pre-Games training in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympics.

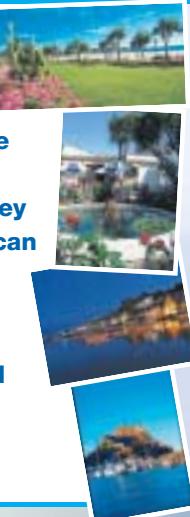
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Villa Isis BB	£239	£239	£270	£277	£304	£311	£321	£321	£328	£338	£345	£355	£355	£345	£355	£334	£344
Mayfair / Metropole HFB	£393	£400	£417	£445	£465	£465	£489	£489	£489	£527	£527	£537	£537	£527	£537	£509	£519
Norfolk BB	£260	£260	£277	£284	£325	£325	£335	£335	£335	£345	£345	£362	£362	£359	£369	£362	£365
Runnymede Court	£323	£340	£340	£340	£360	£381	£391	£391	£391	£401	£429	£439	£439	£429	£439	£439	£435
Flight only	£99	£99	£109	£109	£129	£129	£139	£139	£139	£149	£149	£159	£159	£149	£159	£159	£169
No of seats available	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	48	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50

Flights Depart from KENT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Flight times: 15:25/16:30 13:50/14:50 (Depart/Arrive)

NEW for 2010 Departures from Lydd Airport

*Prices above do not include Transfers (£10 pp return) but do include baggage and check in fees and taxes. BB unless otherwise stated and 2 adults sharing.

Commuters face further fare rise

Government policy stings rail travellers

COMMUTERS across Kent are facing higher travel charges following a Government review of transport policy.

And train passengers parking in many of the station car parks will now also find they have to fork out more money on parking costs.

The changes – which came into effect last week – form part of the Department for Transport's new policy which involves reducing the subsidies it pays into the industry.

As a result, commuter fares for Southeastern's unregulated off-peak tickets have increased by 7.3 per cent, and others by 2.8 per cent.

Fares from outside the Travelcard area, including the London Underground, have seen a 1.6 per cent increase.

Subsidy

Some ticket prices, however, have stayed the same.

A spokesman for Southeastern said: "Government says the budget for running the cost of the railways should not be paid by subsidies through the taxpayer."

"The Government has stated that it should be put back on those who use the service – it will not subsidise the cost of the railways like in Europe."

"What Government is doing is reducing the subsidies it pays to us, but to compensate it is allowing us to increase the ticket prices."

Charles Horton, managing director at Southeastern, added: "The majority of our passengers are commuters who travel into London on a daily basis."

"Most of these are season-ticket-holders and any changes to their fares are regulated by the Department for Transport."

"The Government's stated policy is to reduce the subsidy paid to the transport industry and for passengers to pay more towards the cost of using rail services."

■ BY MARIJKE COX

But Tunde Olatunji, South East spokesman for Passenger Focus, an independent rail consumer watchdog, believes commuters will place the blame with Southeastern rather than with the Government.

He said: "Southeastern may use the lack of Government subsidies as its defence, but for the passenger it is Southeastern they pay the money to and therefore the company people will hold responsible for the changes."

"This all comes down to value for money. If costs are increasing, the passengers will want to see the service improving."

Car-parking costs have also gone up at the majority of station car parks in Kent, but Southeastern defended this by saying it was the first change the company had made in 18 months.

"In terms of car-parking, the majority of station car-park prices have gone up by differing amounts," a spokesman said.

"This has been done to help cover running costs."

"This hasn't changed in 18 months, so we are simply bringing this in line with what has to be paid to Network Rail and money for the upkeep of the car parks."

Mr Olatunji said that although car-parking was a business and people had to pay to park, the level of service should be kept up.

"Passengers have to pay parking costs, otherwise there would be too much pressure on the car parks," he said.

"The issue is about how much Southeastern charges in relation to the level of service offered."

"There was a case at Hollingbourne station where a car was stolen but when the police checked the CCTV there was no tape in there."

"If people are paying money to park, then the service should be sufficient."

For more information about Southeastern trains and ticket prices, you can go to www.southeasternrailway.co.uk.

REGULATED FARES FROM JANUARY 2010

STATION	2009			JANUARY 2010		
	Return	Monthly	Annual	Return	Monthly	Annual
Orpington	£9.80	£139	£1,448	£9.80	£139	£1,448
Tonbridge	£22.90	£288	£3,000	£23.30	£292.60	£3,048
Hastings	£46.30	£368.60	£3,840	£47.10	£368.60	£3,840
Ashford Int	£40.60	£362.90	£3,780	£41.30	£368.60	£3,840
Ashford Int	£48.70	£435.50	£4,536	£49.50	£442.40	£4,608
High Speed						
Ramsgate	£47.00	£366.70	£3,820	£47.80	£372.50	£3,880
Ramsgate	£55.10	£439.30	£4,576	£56.00	£446.20	£4,648
High Speed						
Faversham	£35.90	£345.60	£3,600	£36.50	£351	£3,656
Faversham	£41.30	£415.90	£4,332	£41.90	£422	£4,396
High Speed						

OFF-PEAK (UNREGULATED) DAY RETURN FROM JAN 2010

STATION	OFF-PEAK RETURN		SUPER OFF-PEAK RTN	
	2009	Jan 2010	2009	Jan 2010
Sevenoaks	£8.80	£9.40	n/a	n/a
Margate (not HS)	£25.30	£27.10	£18.10	£18.60
Hastings	£24.20	£26.00	£18.10	£18.60
Sittingbourne	£16.00	£17.20	£14.10	£14.50
Sittingbourne	£18.70	£20.10	n/a	n/a
High Speed				
Folkestone Central	£24.60	£26.40	£18.10	£18.60
Folkestone Central	£28.70	£30.80	n/a	n/a
High Speed				

Heavy cost of modern funerals

FUNERALS can be big affairs, and they are getting larger all the time.

As people get heavier, the dearly departed are causing problems in death, say undertakers.

John Weir runs several undertakers' offices in Kent and is also the UK spokesman for the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors.

He said that although the complications caused by oversize bodies was not widespread yet, it was getting worse as we ate more in life.

His company has invested in a powerful electric hoist to move bodies around and lower them into larger-than-life coffins, and he said many hospital mortuaries had done the same.

The complications continue when it comes to the funeral itself.

Crane have been known to lift coffins into double-sized graves before the congregation arrives to avoid any embarrassing scenes.

Some councils are charging by the foot for their graves – so the bigger the body and coffin, the more the plot costs.

Mr Weir said: "Crematoria don't usually do that – it's one just one flat charge."

But he said Vinters Park in Maidstone had recently introduced a larger cremator which was 41 inches wide as opposed to the more usual 28 inches wide just to cope with an increase in larger coffins.

He said there was a knock-on effect for the taxpayer as local authorities had to pay for the new cremators. Plus, with larger graves, cemeteries ran out of valuable space quicker, forcing some authorities to reuse old plots.

Coffin-maker Julian Atkinson said his products were now larger by two inches in length and width.

"We used to do one a month that was oversized, now it is two or three a week," he said.

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yourletters

TALK TIME

HANNAH COOK

The manager of the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre on preserving flora and fauna from development and climate change.



What is the aim of the centre?

To collect, collate and make as widely available as possible, wildlife and habitat information for Kent and Medway.

We provide information for everything from education and research projects to conservation management plans for nature reserves, as well as reports to go with planning applications to ensure that wildlife is protected during building and development work.

Medway is blessed with a fantastic variety of habitats that provide a haven for wildlife. A visit to Darland Banks in May or June should allow you to see the scarce man orchid which is thriving there, and a walk along the banks of the river inlets to look for signs of water voles is worth a try. Water voles are also nationally endangered but Kent is one of their last remaining strongholds.

Have there been promising trends over recent years?

There's been a huge amount of effort put into preserving and protecting Medway's green spaces. The Valley of Visions project, funded in the main by the Heritage Lottery Fund and co-ordinated by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty unit, has invested £2.5 million to help preserve landscape, wildlife and heritage while encouraging greater access to these areas.

How could climate change affect Medway?

We are receiving more reports of European migrant species. The hummingbird hawk moth used to be an occasional summer visitor, but last year not only did we have far more sightings in the warmer months, we also had our first reported sighting in January.

YOUR LETTERS



Listen and improve winter strategy

The recent icy weather has left a lot of people with concerns about how Medway Council dealt with the situation and also how it will deal with future wintry spells.

Many residents have made very sensible suggestions on how the winter weather strategy may be improved, often at no or very small cost to the council.

The Facebook group which was set up in response to people's experiences of untreated roads and pavements – which has around 1,400 members – is filled with these examples. I was pleased that following my question on this issue at full council, the portfolio holder agreed to consider both the phone calls taken by the council and the Facebook group when looking at the lessons to be learned.

This is to be reported at the forthcoming scrutiny meeting as my ward colleague, Cllr Paul Godwin, has placed a members' item to be heard in March.

I hope that when looking at potential improvements, these suggestions are taken seriously.

Cllr Vince Maple, Chatham Central ward



LETTERS: Please send your letters in to us at Yourmedway, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR



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COMMENT ONLINE TOO

NOT only can you use email and letters to respond to our stories, don't forget you can comment via our website too.

Beneath most stories on the www.yourmedway.co.uk website there is the facility to leave your comments on whatever YOU thought of the online article. To leave your remarks, click on the 'Add your comments' link and tell us what you think.

And remember, www.yourmedway.co.uk is updated daily, bringing you the latest news from across Medway as well as our villages.

We will include the best on these pages too – ensuring your comments reach the widest possible audience.

In addition, if you find your newsagent, supermarket or petrol station runs out of Yourmedway before you've picked up your copy, you never need to miss out. On www.yourmedway.co.uk you can access, for free, the full newspaper in our highly acclaimed e-editions.

Letter of the law in school coat dispute

I was told by a member of staff that my son has been sent home

for defiance for refusing to give up his coat. He had a letter on him from myself stating he has asthma. Mr Lawson told my son he was not interested in his letter. How strange now that Mr Lawson insists that no-one was

excluded. Well, my son certainly was. How strange though that they didn't send him home with a letter. When I told him to stand firm on Tuesday until he had a letter, he was allowed to remain at school.

Elizabeth Lynch, Aylesford,
comment on www.yourmedway.co.uk



• As a teacher myself I am flabbergasted by the lack of care for pupils. Teachers are supposed to act in loco parentis.

I see no evidence of that. If a parent confiscated a child's coat at minus 4C I'm sure social services would be concerned at the very least. Of course uniform is important and all schools regularly have periods where they get tough and enforce the rules. But choosing to do it in freezing temperatures?

Theresa Knott, Bromley,
comment on www.yourmedway.co.uk

Do the right thing

I hope this person is not seriously thinking of remaining as a councilor. He should resign immediately. What message will it send out if he remains in place given the problems we already have with kerb crawling in Medway?



John Colgan, Rochester

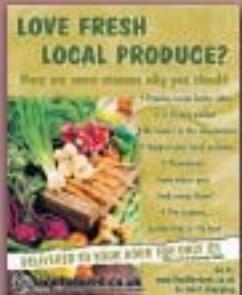
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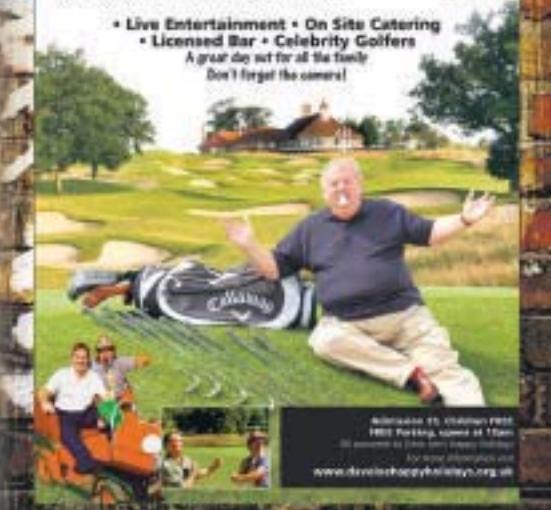
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Team ready and waiting

2010 promises to be a year of change, when voters have the opportunity of ejecting this dreadful Government. The Rainham Central team is ready. The recession has touched us all and we are doing everything we can to promote business.

Our website can be found at www.rainhamcentralconservatives.co.uk. Reh, Barry and Mike, with the assistance of their team, have delivered 35,000 leaflets.

We will continue to support our four PACTs (Partners and Community Together) in St Margaret's, Derwent Way, Wigmore and Barleycorn. These committees are an important liaison between Rainham Central's councillors and constituents. Our street stalls will be held in Rainham shopping centre on a bi-weekly basis. We will continue to work with the police and PCSOs in keeping Rainham Central a safe and pleasant place to live in.

Cllr Mike O'Brien, by email

Tearing community apart

In response to letter headlined 'We must save this delightful church', I agree. Before moving into my first home, I lived in Twydall for 15 years and worked there for five. I then moved to Gillingham on shared ownership with the developer who may demolish the church. I have endured two and half years of hell. They have been caus-

ing problems through shared ownership and social rent schemes. Twydall has a problem with social housing already. The shops late at night can be a scary. More social rented housing will only exacerbate the problem. People need to realise the demolition of this iconic building will not work. When Woolworths went into administration it ripped the heart out of Twydall. This Grade II listed building being demolished will have the same effect.

I am disgusted with the reverend's attitude to this proposal as she will not consider alternative means of saving the church - demolition is not the only way forward.

I hope English Heritage save Twydall church for future generations.

Name and address supplied

Overdraft fight goes on

I was disappointed with the Office of Fair Trading's decision to drop its investigation into overdraft charges. Millions of bank customers were hoping to be reimbursed for unfair and excessive charges.

I am pleased the Liberal Democrats will continue the fight for fair bank charges in Parliament and push for a change in the law if necessary so high street banks cannot keep ripping off customers.

Having come so close to overhauling an unfair system of charging that penalises vulnerable groups of people, the campaign cannot and will not stop.

Andy Stamp, Lib Dem candidate, Gillingham and Rainham

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Gary Wright urges all motorists to report potholes, and to claim for any resulting damage to their vehicles



Why weren't our roads ready for the inevitable big freeze?

IF EVER there was an argument for driving a huge 4x4, then Kent's roads provide it.

The appalling state of maintenance in this county is highlighted every winter, after freezing conditions cause huge cracks to open up.

Potholes cost drivers a heap of cash, wrecking tyres, alloy wheels and suspension. Tyre dealers doubtless rub their hands with glee, but for the rest of us it's an annual nuisance.

We should not put up with it. But if we have to, then it's time to consider a 4x4 instead of the stylish, economical motors that our green chums would have us all drive.

Report every pothole you see to 08458 247 800. That way the council has to do something and it has been informed.

We all know you can claim for the damage to your car, provided – as the council's website makes clear – you can prove "clear evidence that Kent County Council (KCC) has been

negligent in its role as highway authority".

Well I suggest KCC is always negligent through lack of proper care and preparation.

The council has promised it will blitz our roads and carry out repairs... in March.

That is just not good enough. It means six weeks or so of swerving around the canyons that have opened up in our streets. Surely KCC should address the problem right now?

Freezing weather is no surprise. The fact that our poorly-maintained roads crack up at the first sign of frost is no surprise. So KCC should be prepared, and if it isn't, that's negligent.

I watched KCC leader Paul Carter squirm as Meridian TV interviewed him about the pothole problem. Asked about compensation for wrecked wheels and tyres, he mumbled something about 'looking after public money', suggesting not every wrecked car would be paid for out of the public purse.

Shame they weren't so careful with our cash when £50 million was handed over to doomed Icelandic banks really.

The council's annual budget for potholes is £3 million, apparently, and a spokesman said:

"Kent Highway Services had already set aside an extra £576,000 to take account of an expected increased workload due to bad weather – and the additional £1 million comes on top of this."

It is not enough.

Then Cllr Carter dressed it up by making it look as though it was supporting local business by inviting them to help with the repairs.

He said: "We are keen to use small and medium-sized engineering companies from across Kent. They will be encouraged to bid for tenders to repair our roads as part of our Backing Kent Business campaign. We hope this will provide a welcome boost for local business."

Hmm, I'm not so sure other small businesses running cars and vans will feel quite so supported after shelling out for vehicle repairs.

If your car has been damaged visit www.kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport and go to 'fault reporting'. Happy motoring.

GET IN TOUCH...

We want to hear your views



EMAIL: Letters, comments, views (along with your name) to: yourmedway@kosmedia.co.uk



TEXT: **MEDW** then your message to: 81800 (please remember to include you name)

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If there is a story in your area you think we

should be covering contact the news editor, **Simon Robinson**, on **01303 817048** or email

him on the details above. If you want to be the next Medway blogger then all you have to do is

submit an article to us (of around 550 words)

and email it to the news editor. And don't

forget, for all the latest news and video from

your town log-on to www.yourmedway.co.uk.

Write to The Editor, Yourmedway, KoS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

• We cannot guarantee all articles will be published and all are at the editor's discretion

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SAVE £80 ON THE PULSAR KINETIC WATCH ONLY £59.99 INC. P&P (RRP £139.99)

This stylish Pulsar watch is from the Seiko Watch Corporation, which has been at the cutting edge of precision watch making for over 100 years.

Featuring award winning kinetic technology, unique to the Seiko group, it transforms the movement of your body into electricity, harnessing it into the rechargeable power cell. Just normal everyday wear provides a backup charge sufficient to run the watch for up to six months.

Further features include Lumibrite hands and markers, which appear illuminated at night, clear hour, minute and second hands, numeric markers, and a magnified date window. It is also water resistant to 100m. The Pulsar Kinetic watch has classic military styling, which is set off by a brushed stainless steel case, an understated black dial, and a black padded leather strap with contrasting stitching. It is guaranteed by the manufacturer for two years.



Item Code 4002

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Suitable for both men and women, they are perfect for the garden and country walks. They are available in full sizes from 4-11, in dark green with a smart brown cotton corduroy trim.



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yourcompetition

Churchill
Theatre
Bromley

WIN tickets to hit musical Dreamboats and Petticoats now!

DUE to its phenomenal West End success, Dreamboats and Petticoats, the smash hit musical inspired by the million-plus selling albums, is to extend its UK tour.

The dazzling success of the first two albums in the Dreamboats and Petticoats series sent the message loud and clear. With over two millions copies sold and several weeks in the compilation charts, the Great British public were saying that they didn't just want to listen to pure nostalgia: they'd love to see it as well.

Thus Dreamboats was born as a musical, opening at The Churchill Theatre in Bromley in February 2009 to rave critical reviews and widespread audience acclaim. Over a million people have since been enchanted by an evening of pure hedonistic affection for a more innocent era, when love was young and so was rock 'n' roll.

Having recently sold out on its return there in November 2009, the show will begin its extended run with a two week visit, from Tuesday, January 19 2010 and continue on a 17 week national tour.

Yourlocal has 10 pairs of tickets up for grabs to see this great show.

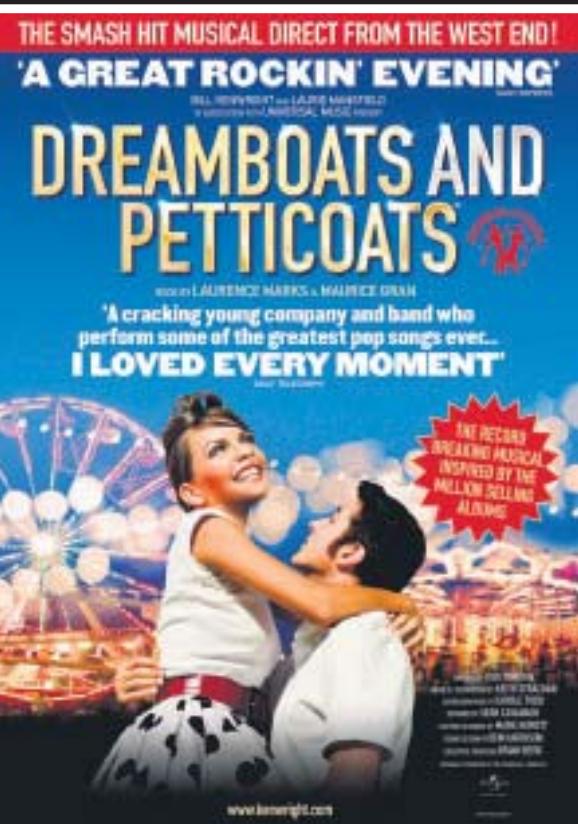
To enter, answer the question below

and send your entry on a postcard along with your email address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Rochester Castle Sunday Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR. The closing date is January 25, 2009.

Question: Where is the Churchill Theatre?

Book tickets for the show running from 19-30 Jan, from Churchill Theatre, Bromley. Phone: 08448 717 620 (booking fee applies) or at www.ambassadortickets.com/bromley.

No purchase necessary. For our full Terms and Conditions please visit www.kentnews.co.uk, or for a posted copy of the T&Cs call 01303 817073. If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.



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 Three screenshots of websites are shown side-by-side. The first is for Lenleys, featuring a red stethoscope and a 'Web Health check' box. The second is for Pharon IFA Limited, showing a nest with eggs and a 'helping plan for your future'. The third is for Potts, showing a kitchen interior.

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Managing Director, **Lenleys** (www.lenleys.co.uk)

"A priority for us was to make our website visible to search engines, Judd Associates delivered and put us on page one."

Managing Director, **Pharon IFA Limited** (www.pharon.co.uk)

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Barbara Coker on **01303 817072**



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The Evolution II is available in silver for **£24.99**, and makes a perfect companion for your vacuum cleaner.



Item Code 7887



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yourleisure

Funnier than a broken record

Comedy legends are sketching out their success

PAPPY'S

Thursday, February 4
Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury



LOCAL heroes return to Canterbury next month to attempt a world record with their lightning wit.

Pappy's are an award-winning comedy trio who have taken the circuit by storm with their ridiculous humour and silly characters. Now they have set their sights on a place in the record books by performing 200 sketches in an hour.

The trio have just had a fantastic year in which they enjoyed a sell-out run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and earned five-star reviews for their uplifting show. Previously they had

recorded their own shows for Channel 4 and Radio 4, appeared on BBC3's Comedy Shuffle and ITV2's Comedy Cuts and received a number of award nominations. In 2008 they won the Chortle Best Sketch Act Award and the plaudits keep coming for their imaginative work.

Pappy's Fun Club started out as four students – Matthew Crosby from Bromley, Tom Parry, Ben Clark and Brendan Dodds – who performed comedy to entertain their friends; the three of them had met at the University of Kent.

Before long they had been nominated for the If.Comedy Best Show Award at Edinburgh, a prestigious accolade that got their comedy careers off to a flying start.

The team like to gig on the stand-

up club circuit and in that environment bringing down the 'fourth wall' erected by many sketch troupes has been invaluable.

The performers address the audience directly and like to react to anything that might be happening in the room during sketches.

Their success on the circuit and at Edinburgh resulted in TV interest, including a 22-minute Comedy Lab for Channel 4. Pappy's had the chance to work with Ash Atalla, producer of The Office, and relished the chance to translate their stage material to the screen.

They went on to perform around the world and draw high praise from critics, though Dodds left the group at the end of last year and the remaining trio decided to continue under the name Pappy's.

You can see them attempt to break a world record when the show, which is suitable for over-14s, starts at 7.45pm. Tickets cost £12 or £10 for Encore!Gulbenkian members. To book, phone 01227 769075 or visit www.gulbenkiantheatre.co.uk.



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with

JANE CONNOLLYEmail jane.connolly@kosmedia.co.uk**PUSS IN BOOTS**Various dates
St William's Church, Walderslade

JOIN Puss in Boots as he grapples with love, loyalty and shoes in this panto by the United Players.

With a distracted Queen, a wicked ogre and a romance to contend with, Puss has plenty to keep him busy in this light-hearted show.

It is the Queen's birthday and the royal couple's attention has wandered to her obsession with footwear. While King Oh Dear and Queen So and So are distracted, Ogre and his side-kick Ramsbottom have designs on their kingdom.

Dame Miller's windmill is their first target but she is busy trying to figure out who is heir to the windmill. Meanwhile, Tom has fallen in love with Princess Chelsey and Puss has his own love-hate relationship to endure



with Socks the dog. With kidnaps, chases and custard pies, there is lots of action, laughter and music to make the show go with a swing.

The show runs from Friday

to Sunday and again on Friday, January 29 and Saturday, January 30. Tickets cost £6/£4. To book call 07857 898178 or visit www.unitedplayers.co.uk.

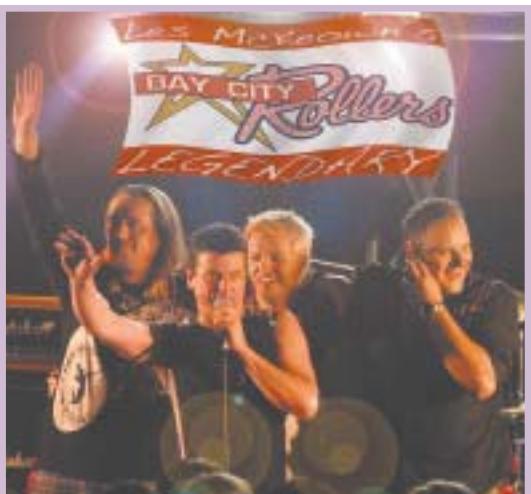
ROLLERMANIAThursday, January 28
Woodville Halls, Gravesend

DIG out those tartan flares and prepare for an evening of teenage nostalgia when Rollermania rolls into Gravesend.

Former frontman Les McKeown brings his Legendary Bay City Rollers to Kent to relive the glory days of pop music.

In the 70s the band became a worldwide phenomenon, greeted by hordes of screaming fans wherever they went. With McKeown's voice and charm at the helm, the Rollers achieved nine UK top 10 hits, including two number ones, and dominated the pop scene for five years.

Their first two albums stayed in the charts for a total of 99 weeks. McKeown left the band just before his 23rd birthday and after pursuing a solo career, he returned to his Roller roots



by establishing the new band in the 90s.

Since then Les McKeown has travelled the world to bring his feel-good show to fans everywhere, celebrating the great pop music that

turned Bay City Rollers into global stars.

The show starts at 8pm. Tickets cost £17.50/£15.50. To book call the box office on 01474 337774 or visit www.woodvillehalls.com.

PAUL CARRACKThursday, January 21
Orchard Theatre, Dartford

AS the voice of Ace, Squeeze and Mike & the Mechanics, Paul Carrack melted music fans with his soulful tone.

He is touring the country to promote his latest album, I Know That Name, which has had lots of exposure on BBC Radio 2. The single, I Don't Want to Hear Any More, features Eagles' Don Henley and Timothy B Schmit on backing vocals. The song has also been released as a single by The Eagles.

Carrack grew up in Sheffield and joined his first band, the progressive rock outfit Warm Dust, in the early 70s. After joining forces with the band's bassist, Tex Comer, to form Ace, he scored a massive hit with How Long and they released three albums before Carrack moved on to become the keyboard player with Roxy Music.

More successful stints with Squeeze and Mike & the Mechanics followed, but Carrack has also proved himself to be a formidable solo artist.

The show starts at 8pm and tickets cost £30.50/£26.50. Book online at www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01322 220000.



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MEDWAY LEISURE**Jazz musicians to give classics a new twist**

CLASSICAL pieces will be reworked by two jazz stars in a unique concert at the Command House next week.

Pianist Will Butterworth, a rising star in the jazz world, joins established drummer Dylan Howe at the venue at Gun Wharf, Chatham, with their take on Stravinsky's Firebird Suite and Rite of Spring. The concert starts at 8.30pm on Wednesday, January 27. Admission is £5.

Tribute act Ricky gets you rocking and rolling

GET ready to rock and roll with 50s and 60s tribute act, Ricky Fontayne.

Be transported back in time with classic hits from the rocking era. Find out more at www.rickyfontayne.com.

Fontayne will be at Palmerstone Working Men's Club in Chatham at 8.45pm on Saturday. Admission is free. For details call Tony on 01634 841530.

Keep all your balls in the air at juggling club

LEARN a new skill at Jugglez, a community juggling club based in Medway.

The club is held at St Margaret's Millennium Centre in Rainham on two Fridays each month. Run by the community for the community, the club is a non-profit making organisation.

The next sessions are this Friday, from 7.30-9.30pm. Admission costs £2. For more information visit www.jugglez.org.

Seventies band back with folk-rock blend

FOLK fans should not miss a performance by the Bully Wee Band at the Brook Theatre in Chatham.

After enjoying their first run of international success in the 70s, Bully Wee Band split up only to reform 20 years later. Now they continue to delight fans with their fantastic acoustic folk-rock.

The concert starts at 8pm on Thursday. Tickets cost £10/£9. Book at www.medway.gov.uk/theatrebooking or call the box office on 01634 338338.

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Lovedays lead the way as Suburban Kings return

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

THE monthly Suburban Kings club night returns next weekend with a Lovedays-led line-up.

The polished quartet will be joined on the Tap 'n' Tin's bill by Medway five-piece The Deccas, the very talented Archie Wah Wahs and teenage upstarts The Facades.

and teenage upstarts The Faccas. Usual Suburban Kings rules apply: the night will be topped off with club DJs, doors open at 8pm, entry costs £6. Drinks promotions help plug the band changeover periods.

While details of February's SK night have not been revealed, over-excited/incredibly-organised-for-a-band The Ambience have started promoting their appearance at the March SK night, pencilled in for March 6.

Support comes from The Bela Lugosi Blues, formerly known as The Mind Without Maths.

More acts will be revealed nearer the time. The March gig will see Suburban Kings turn four. Promoter Matt Harvey said he was delighted with how the night had grown.

"I never thought we'd be doing it for more than a year, never mind four," he said. "It has become a bit of an obsession for me; I really enjoy doing the artwork and finding the best local new bands – hopefully before all the other promoters in Kent!"

Matt said picking a highlight from the four years would be nigh-on impossible, but when pressed he said: "I guess the most notable act to have played is just making it big now, Ellie Goulding. She played for us more than two years ago and has just won a Brit award and been named one of the ones to watch for 2010



SUBURBAN: The Deccas and Lovedays (frontman Ben Jones pictured right) are at the Tap 'n' Tin next weekend in pretty much every guide I've seen.

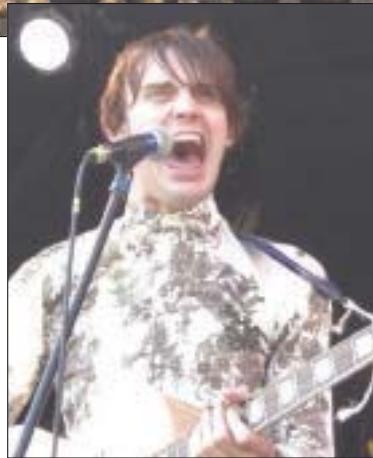
"It is discovering the new acts that I really enjoy. We had Underground Heroes really early on and the same with the likes of The Wombats, Smoke Fairies and Kid Harpoon."

Four years in, Suburban Kings shows no signs of running out of steam.

"This year we're looking at putting on more of the same nights," said Matt. "I'm really excited about a new band called Facades and solo singer-songwriter Natalie Evans.

"It'll also be interesting to watch the continued rise of other top local bands, like Onlookers and The Bela Lugosi Blues."

For information go to www.myspace.com/SuburbanKings.



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 Canterbury-based singer songwriter Lucy Kitt plays Laurel Canyon



Dover-based funk grunge rock band Kingskin



TOP FIVE KENT GIGS

- 1 Gristlefridge - Unbreakable (from Whitstable)
- 2 We Are Tides - Mice and Men (from Canterbury)
- 3 Gristlefridge - The Drunk Song (from Whitstable)
- 4 Shelta - Beautiful Girl (from Bexley)
- 5 The Flack - Forget Me (from Deal)



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The Leisure Club has been open for five years and has established a friendly and sociable scene where members like to work out. Take part in one of the 70 classes each week, having a relaxing swim or use the spa.

In recent weeks a special new attraction has been the Powerplate. The club has also taken delivery of 21 fantastic Star Trac spinning bikes. Classes are proving immensely popular, with 16 taking place each week under the watchful eyes of expert instructors.

The Powerplate is a great way to tone up and stretch muscles, or provide a massage.

Customers who are new to a gym are given expert friendly advice and immediately made to feel at home.

If they have a particular goal in mind – such as running the London Marathon or getting ready for a wedding day – a personal trainer will guarantee success.

After all the hard work, the Village is the ideal place to unwind. A 25-metre swimming pool is ideal for serious athletes or those who want to do a few lengths and then relax in the Jacuzzi, while the complex includes the Victory Pub, Verve Grill restaurant and the



only remaining Starbucks in Maidstone.

Chris Guildford, the complex's leisure manager, has been in the industry for a decade and really does know how to offer the best for all customers – developing his enthusiasm for sports from a previous job as a lifeguard.

The hotel is always open and the fitness facilities can be used from 6.30am until 10pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 8pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

Village Hotel and Leisure, Forstal Rd, Maidstone 01622 672200, www.village-hotels.co.uk

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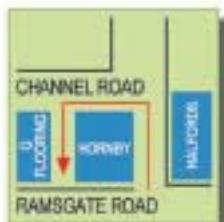
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VAT-registered businesses in Kent are being urged to get ready for major changes to VAT return filing and payment coming in April.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has sent a leaflet to all 1.9 million VAT-registered businesses to alert them to the fact that, from April 1, 2010, those with an annual turnover of £100,000 or more, excluding VAT, will have to file their VAT returns online and pay their VAT electronically.

Under the changes, businesses registering for VAT on or after April 1 will also have to file their return online and pay electronically, whatever their turnover.

Every year, around 5,200 businesses register for VAT in Kent.

The average number of businesses registering for VAT each year by area is:

- Medway 619
- Ashford 481
- Canterbury 397
- Dartford 299
- Dover 247
- Gravesham 258
- Maidstone 545
- Sevenoaks 508
- Shepway 286
- Swale 377
- Thanet 313
- Tonbridge and Malling 401
- Tunbridge Wells 454

HMRC told all VAT-registered businesses in the county to take notice of the changes, as well as local firms who are planning to register for VAT in the coming months.

To file a VAT return online, businesses new to HMRC's online services need to register for the VAT Online service by visiting www.online.hmrc.gov.uk, clicking 'register' under the 'new user' section and then following the instructions.

Current HMRC online service users can add VAT Online to their portfolio in the 'Services you can add' section of 'Your HMRC services'.

HMRC's Stephen Banyard said: "Filing your

VAT return dread? Click on to a new system

VAT return online has a number of benefits: it's secure, convenient, does arithmetical checks and calculations for you, and provides you with an immediate online acknowledgement that your online return has been safely received by us.

"So, if your turnover is £100,000 or more, and you're not already filing your VAT return online, sign-up now for VAT online services – that way, you'll avoid a last-minute rush, and be able to enjoy the benefits of online filing sooner rather than later."

HMRC will also be sending formal letters in February to all existing businesses affected by the new online filing and electronic payment requirements, confirming that in future they must file online.

and pay electronically.

And, from
April

1, a letter explaining the requirement to file online will be included in all registration packs issued to newly registering VAT businesses. Both letters will be accompanied by a guide on registering for VAT Online.

Further help and advice, including an online demonstrator and a step-by-step guide to filing online, is available on HMRC's website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat, or by calling its VAT helpline on 0845 010 9000.

GO ONLINE: A new simpler system to file your tax return has been set up by HMRC online



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

Mergers and acquisitions:

ISSUES FOR BUYERS

BUYING a business involves many risks. If a buyer is not careful, he may end up paying more than just the agreed purchase price. However, with careful planning and proper advice, these risks can be reduced.

The most important factor is to know what you are buying. This may seem an obvious point, but if you are buying shares in a company, you are buying all assets and liabilities of that company, whether known or unknown, actual or contingent.

Due diligence is vital, therefore. This will involve scrutinising the target's financial and tax records, cash-flows and budgets, business and employment contracts, properties and other assets.

The price will probably be agreed with the seller before due diligence takes place, but a buyer must not be afraid to renegotiate if due diligence throws up issues or liabilities which were not expected.

The price payable for the business can be structured in many ways. It is rare nowadays for a buyer and seller to agree a fixed price, all of which is payable on the date of the acquisition. The price can be payable in instalments and occasionally the value of the instalments are calculated by reference to the profits or turnover of the business during the intervening period (known as an earn-out). It is also quite common for the price to be adjusted by reference to accounts of the business which are prepared as at the date of the acquisition, so the buyer is paying for the assets and liabilities on the balance sheet at that date.

If the target business is a company, the buyer may choose to buy the shares or the assets from the company. Buying shares is generally more risky for a buyer. It means buying the company 'lock, stock and barrel' and inheriting any skeletons in the company's cupboard. It is actu-

ally a much simpler structure and likely to be favoured by sellers. Buying assets may be more tax-efficient for the buyer and it allows the buyer to cherry-pick the specific assets it wants, but it will involve the complexities of transferring individual assets and having to renew or assign contracts with customers and suppliers.

The principle method for a buyer to protect itself against unknown liabilities post-acquisition is to obtain warranties from the seller.

Warranties are statements of fact relating to the business which are relied on by the buyer as being true. If a warranty subsequently turns out to be untrue, the buyer will be able to claim damages for breach of warranty. The warranties often take up a significant proportion of the purchase contract and a lot of time is often spent negotiating their terms and application.

Compensation

The warranties serve two purposes: Firstly, they force the seller to disclose any information it knows about a warranty which is untrue, so the buyer has a full picture of what it is buying. Secondly, the warranties serve as a price adjustment mechanism by enabling the buyer to claim compensation for damages, losses or liabilities arising from a warranty being untrue, effectively reducing the price of the business.

Employees are often key to a business, but sometimes a buyer will not want or need all of the seller's employees. However, a buyer will inherit responsibility for all of the seller's employees, so careful consideration is necessary before any redundancy decisions are made, either by the buyer or the seller.

The acquisition of a business should be a stepping stone for greater success and profits for a buyer. Buyers must ensure that the terms of the acquisition fully protect them against it being an expensive mistake.



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DONE DEAL: Make sure you are aware of the risks of buying and selling a business before a deal goes ahead

ISSUES FOR SELLERS

A BUSINESS owner is likely to have shed blood, sweat and tears in making their business as successful as possible. Unless it is a family business and the next generation is ready to pick up the reins, these efforts will hopefully culminate in selling the business or, for the more ambitious, floating it on a stock exchange.

In light of this almost inevitable endgame, it is surprising how few business owners are prepared for the issues and procedures which will be relevant when the time for exit arrives. Being underprepared may result in receiving less than full value for the business.

Business owners must plan for their exit well in advance. Some of the most important things to ensure are also the most obvious, but that does not always mean they are observed.

The business structure must be established in a way which makes the sale as straightforward as possible. For example, if the business is operated through a company, are there any divisions, properties or assets which need to be extracted from the company before a sale?

All corporate and commercial documents relating to the business must be complete and up to date. They will be scrutinised during a buyer's due diligence, so do not give the buyer any excuse to delay or renegotiate the terms of the sale.

Key employees of the business should be signed up to employment contracts which comply with current employment legislation and contain enforceable restrictive covenants. The employees may be a valuable ingredient in the business, so a buyer will want to be satisfied that they are tied, as well as they can be, to the business.

If the business relies on unique intellectual property rights, it is imperative to ensure that these rights are protected as much as possible, whether by way of patent, trade mark, registered design rights, copyright or even simple confidentiality provisions.

Careful tax planning will also be key. The sale of shares in a company will almost certainly result in a lower tax bill for shareholders compared to the company selling its business and assets. This is because the company will have to pay corporation tax on its gains before the balance of proceeds can be distributed to its shareholders. However, there are exceptions to this rule, so always review the position early with a tax advisor.

When approaching potential buyers, it is important that sellers do not disclose too much information without first procuring signed confidentiality undertakings from the recipients of any information, to protect the business' trade secrets, customer and employee lists, pricing policies and other sensitive information.

Debenture

If a buyer makes an offer which includes an element of the purchase price being payable after the date of sale (possibly on an earn-out basis), the seller should consider what protection they require.

For example, should the buyer provide some form of security over the deferred element, such as a bank guarantee or debenture? If the deferred amount is dependant on future turnover or profits of the business, should there be provisions requiring the business to be conducted in the same manner as it was conducted before the sale? Careful consideration should also be given to the tax implications of any deferred element of the purchase price because, without careful planning, it is possible that tax will be payable on the full value of the purchase price, even if only some of it is paid on the date of sale.

There are many additional issues which need to be considered by sellers before they embark on the exit process, but hopefully this article highlights a handful of the most significant factors.

- *Nicholas Gabay, Partner Corporate & Commercial Department, Thomson Snell & Passmore.*

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

By JEREMY GATES

AS A new year begins, the search for shares and managed funds with 'hot' prospects will continue for small investors seeking to supplement their income.

In the Noughties, the game lost much of its sparkle. It's been a grim time for shares, especially those in banks once seen as solid and reliable, such as Lloyds TSB, Royal Bank of Scotland and HBOS. In 30 months of financial mayhem, income and capital gains from shares have plunged.

Well-regarded blue chips sank too, although many bounced back in the 54 per cent surge by London's FTSE 100 index since March.

The turmoil may not yet be over. Savers nearing retirement may be reluctant to touch equities at all, in case they sink to the lows that London prices hit in early 2009.

Despite the doom and gloom, however, small investors still hold £162 billion of shares, says Capita Registrars.

And with minimal returns from rival investments such as property and savings accounts, people trying to build a lump sum to allow earlier retirement will want some money in shares – or funds that hold mostly stocks.

Caution is the watchword with most pundits. Nobody knows how share prices will respond when the Government's policy of quantitative easing is eventually switched off.

Jonathan Jackson, head of equities at broker Killik & Co, has some FTSE 100 giants in his Top Ten for 2010, including GlaxoSmithKline, BG Group, Barclays, hedge-fund manager

Man Group and FT owner Pearson. Most of these pay good dividends, around five per cent, even if capital growth may be limited.

Killik's high-yielding portfolio, with firms from the FTSE 100, Mid 250 and Small Cap, pays an average dividend of 5.7 per cent, with limited downside risk short of financial armageddon. He predicts the FTSE 100 will be at 5,850 by the end of 2010, about eight per cent up on the current level of 5,400.

Richard Hunter at discount broker Hargreaves Lansdown is slightly more hopeful. He sees the Bank of England base rate at 1.5 per cent by December, and the FTSE 100 around 6,000 in 12 months' time.

He plumps for BP (paying 5.5 per cent), Tesco, Home Retail (owner of Argos/Homebase) and one of the pharmaceutical giants, either GlaxoSmithKline or AstraZeneca.

Among tiddlers, he likes Davis Service Group, a £700 million company trading as Sunlight in the UK and Ireland to provide uniforms and workwear to a range of companies.

Globally, Hunter thinks 2010 could be the year when the economic might of China is widely recognised.

Tim Steer at the Artemis UK Growth Fund is backing firms focused on change – among them oil minnow Sterling Energy, listed on

London's junior AIM market. He also likes Ricardo, focused on improving fuel efficiency for the automotive sector.

Peter Saacke, fund manager at Artemis Global Growth, thinks 2010 will deliver higher income from shares as dividends recover. His core holdings include Cobham, Northumbrian Water and Imperial Tobacco.

In an atmosphere of huge uncertainty, there are attractions in making monthly payments into managed funds: if share prices, investors buy more shares with the same subscription.

Choosing a specialist fund is also an easy way into global markets where most investors know little about specific shares.

Emerging markets boomed in 2009, notably the BRIC chain of Brazil, Russia, India and China. Neptune's Russia & Greater Russia, launched five years ago and heavily invested in oil, mining and gas companies, was a top-performing fund in 2009, soaring by 107 per cent. Alliance RCM BRIC Stars had another great year with an 80 per cent surge.

Can they keep it up? As the developing world continues to grow, demand for raw materials grows too – which might be a case for backing JP Morgan Natural Resources, up by more than 600 per cent in the past decade.

Virgin Money's Investor Intentions Index says emerging markets pushed UK shares to second place in advice given by financial advisors during 2009, but some doubt this surge can be maintained. In any case, investors bruised by 2007-09 might choose safe funds for 2010, rather than those set to soar.

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Twelve ways

BY JEREMY GATES

MANY families who cut back on spending in 2009 on the assumption of recovery in 2010 may already be having a rethink, and are looking for fresh ways to prune the budget after warnings another 250,000 jobs could go in the new year.

Unemployment could hit three million by mid-summer, says the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) – partly because of rising inflation and the rise in VAT. Counting the pennies this year could be more important than last.

"People should review their finances on a regular basis and the turn of the year is a great trigger to do just that," said Clare Francis at moneysupermarket.com.

"For those suffering an extra financial hangover from the festive period, recovery will be quicker in 2010 if significant savings are made."

Ms Francis estimates an average household could save £4,000 a year, simply by getting the cheapest deals in those areas of spending few of us can avoid, like mortgage repayments and energy bills.

Here are a dozen spending checks which any household can make.

1. Mortgages – use low interest rates to overpay your mortgage, while 'interest only' borrowers who switch to capital repayment terms with their current lender may be surprised by savings in the long-term.

Moneysupermarket.com estimates that somebody paying an extra £50 per month on a capital repayment could save £40,000 over the 300-month life of a mortgage.

Andrew Hagger at Moneynet.co.uk points out that switching lenders might not be worth it for those with small loans, because of the hefty fees incurred. Above £70,000, though, it might be worth looking at cheaper fixes, including a Leeds BS five-year fix at 4.75 per cent or Mansfield BS's two-year fix at 3.59 per cent.

Don't linger on a Standard Variable Rate (SVR) loan because rates are likely to rise this year. Someone with a £150,000, two-year mortgage at Coventry BS fixed at 3.5 per cent would save £2,278 against the average SVR rate.

2. Get the cheapest loan – Nationwide BS thinks many consumers with debts spread across credit and store cards, overdrafts and loans could save by consolidating the debts into its new personal loans costing a typical 7.6 per cent APR on £7,500-14,999 for up to five years, the rate being fixed for the full term of the loan.

This undercuts the 7.9 per cent offer on £7,500-15,000 advances, with Nectar points, unveiled by Sainsbury's Finance.

3. Credit cards – if you can get your card debts accepted for a zero per cent balance transfer deal, there's a case for cutting the card up to ensure you don't make new purchases, possibly charged at 16 per cent.

4. Be a careful shopper – write down what you need before entering the supermarket, and you can easily save £20 per week, says Andrew Hagger at Moneynet.co.uk. That's worth £1,000 a year, which you can use to pay off debts elsewhere.

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5. Home and motor insurance – comparison site Gocompare.com reckons 21 million drivers are missing out on cheaper cover. Also, only 19 per cent of consumers switched their home insurer in the last year.

Gocompare.com says its customers could save an average £211 by comparing policies from more than 120 insurers and brokers.

A new deal from Direct Line offers 52 days of free cover on car insurance, while home insurance policies offer 12 months' cover for the price of nine, with a free home-emergency policy to cover call-outs, parts and labour on some domestic crises.

6. Claim all available benefits – if family income is less than £40,000 and both partners work 16 hours a week plus, you're eligible for childcare tax credits worth hundreds of pounds, assuming the care is registered with Ofsted.

7. Current Account – A&L, part of Santander Group, re-introduces its £100 cashback for those switching to its Premier Current Account from January 11. Other perks include a fee-free agreed overdraft for 12 months, free European travel insurance and 0.5 per cent credit interest, on condition at least £500 is paid in each month.

8. Maximise savings rates – the big institutions still need your cash, with Abbey and A&L kick-starting the new year with a range of fixed-rate bonds paying up to 4.1 per cent gross/AER on minimum £1 deposits invested for one year upwards.

9. Start saving for next Christmas – Yorkshire BS is launching a 2010 Christmas saver account, branch-based and

postal, paying a fixed rate of 3.5 per cent gross on a minimum £10 deposit. The account will take a maximum £1,200.

Savers prepared to set aside £250 per month, can get five per cent from the Norwich & Peterboro' BS Family Regular Saver.

10. Energy bills – obvious ways to save, said Will Marples at uSwitch.com, include paying by direct debit, switching to dual fuel, and signing up to

an online plan which are about £300 a year cheaper than standard energy plans.

11. TV, telephone and internet – Moneysupermarket.com reckons bundling your TV, landline and broadband connections can save about £130 a year, compared with the cost of standalone products.

For a standalone line rental deal, www.Homephonechoices.co.uk's Primus Home Phone Saver package offers free evening and weekend calls to UK landlines for £9.15 line rental per month.

12. Travel – If you know when you want to go, train travel needn't cost the earth. Advance tickets are available up to 12 weeks in advance, and are claimed to be the cheapest ticket option.

While bus passes are free for pensioners, railcards can lop a third from off-peak rail fares. Sign up for alerts from www.thetrainline.com to save an average 43 per cent on the price of 'turn up and go' tickets.

Many travel firms could go bust in 2010, putting your money at risk. The British Insurance Brokers Association (BIBA) recommends policies by Tokio Marine Europe, but Direct Line and AA Travel Insurance claim to offer protection against corporate failures.

• *Unbiased.co.uk, which promotes the benefits of independent financial advice, has a new financial calendar to help consumers plan their payments and spending. It can be downloaded free at www.unbiased.co.uk/financial-tools/financial-calendar.*

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■ FG Barnes Motors in Maidstone is offering a half-price MOT with full service

■ KOS Media is offering an Inovalley digital (freeview) 7in LCD TV, integrated digital photo frame and radio alarm clock only £119.99 (inc p&p), RRP £149.99

■ Northgate Alfa Motors in Canterbury is offering fixed-price servicing for cars three years plus, eg silver care, £139

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering a free glass of wine with your Sunday lunch throughout Jan and Feb in the Verve Grill

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FAMILY MATTERS:
Parents must think carefully about how to provide for their children



By **JEREMY PASSMORE**
Thomson Snell & Passmore

MANY people want to provide funds for their children and grandchildren, to help with all the varied calls for money they will experience during their younger years and into adulthood.

It is not always easy to know how best to structure any such provision. One wants to ensure that children have an appropriate degree of access to the monies, and that the structure serves to minimise the impact of taxes.

1. Bare Trusts – are arrangements where trustees are acting really only as nominees, with the beneficiaries having beneficial ownership of the monies.

Where funds are provided by grandparents, grandchildren can use their personal allowances for income tax and annual exemptions for CGT, which is likely to be better than if the monies were held by the parents or

Do you trust the children?

grandparents. If the funds are provided by parents, however, income tax is assessed on them until the children reach 18.

A disadvantage is at 18 the children can call for the money which belongs to them; because it might be spent unwisely does perhaps mean such trusts should not be over funded, to leave an 18 year old with too much to spend. While they are under 18, the monies can be used freely for their benefit, including paying school fees.

2. Discretionary Trusts – are used when the amount is more than would be appropriate for the children to take at 18; or where it is intended that the funds should be held to give benefit to the beneficiaries until a greater age such as 25; or where one wants to have the ability to favour some beneficiaries over others. Such trusts are very flexible and can target the benefit at the appropriate time.

A disadvantage is the trustees will need to

manage the funds and produce a separate tax return; with a bare trust the income is simply treated as belonging to the child and only a tax repayment claim will be needed. Furthermore, income tax rates for trustees are now high, with a 50 per cent rate from April.

The effect of this is mitigated if the income is paid out to beneficiaries who are non or lower rate tax payers. Accordingly it would normally be best to fund the trust at the sort of level where income being generated can safely be paid out, to avoid the trustees retaining income and suffering tax at 50 per cent.

Once again there is a difference if the funds are provided by a parent, with the tax assessed on the parent if the income is distributed; but if the income is accumulated, then it will be taxed at 50 per cent! So if parents want to get funds out of their estates, perhaps for IHT reasons, it would be wise not to invest to

produce a high level of income while the children are under age, although once they reach 18 the rules change and income paid out to the children is taxed on them and not their parent.

3. Provision by will – grandparents can bypass their children and set up trusts for grandchildren in their wills. The parents will probably benefit indirectly from the funds available and the trust can be drafted so the children's own personal tax position can be taken advantage of.

This will not happen if the fund is below the nil rate band threshold, currently £325,000. If someone wants to set up a larger fund, then there are ways to avoid any IHT charge by giving the children a right to income.

The circumstances and requirements of families differ greatly; one needs to think carefully about what one is trying to achieve and to structure gifts to achieve that in the most appropriate and tax effective way.

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Open a new car savings account

BY STEVE LOADER

THERE may be a glimmer of light at the end of the recessionary tunnel, but is it too soon to think about a new car?

No. In fact, there was a strong argument for some of us to buy new wheels even in the worst depths of the downturn and those circumstances continue to prevail.

With savings accounts earning so little, you might make more by saving a huge wedge on a new car thanks to big discounts at the moment.

Fact is, there has been much hype about the Government-sponsored £2,000-a-time Scrappage grant scheme, but dealers have been knocking cash off cars for months – whether you have a 10-year-old 'scrapper' to trade in or not.

There are other deals that can be factored in too, such as zero or low rate finance.

And don't forget to ask for trimmings like a tank of fuel, car mats or further discounts on any add-ons you fancy.

Do your homework though to ensure you are not buying an unpopular engine or trim combination or, worse, a car on 'run-out' where production ceased a while ago.

After all, you don't want to trade your old gas guzzler for another just as thirsty or likely to depreciate badly.

Buy wisely though and your new vehicle could save on fuel, insurance, road tax and even depreciation, though cars always

devalue unless they achieve classic status.

You can also afford to congratulate yourself for ditching something less efficient in favour of a modern and more eco-friendly model.

On the other hand, review your proposed part-exchange; a knee-jerk disposal and the cost of replacement, could be daunting even when judged against its high running costs for the next three years and eventual disposal when the market is more settled.

Budget

Road tax favours downsizing – gas guzzling limos or 4x4s face £950 a year road tax from April 1 next year – but this is still a small part of the motoring budget for most of us.

Many superminis currently sit in the lowest road tax band of £35 a year and though you might be tempted by new tax-exempt diesel eco models, just check the price against a standard version.

The eco supermini might save £105 road tax over three years, but how much will you pay upfront for it? A lot more and you might not think the driving experience worth paying extra for either.

Be aware too that from April 1, all cars emitting 130g/km or less will be zero-rated for tax in their first year on the road.

So, check out conventional equivalents of eco models and don't dismiss petrol power; the fuel is still cheaper and makes sense for lower mileage users, while emission and consumption levels are closing the gap on their heavier diesel equivalents.



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Motability

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Northgate Alfa Motors in Canterbury is offering fixed price servicing for cars three years plus gold care £169

■ Robins and Day Motors in Rochester is offering MOT from £29.99. Service and MOT from £119.99

■ Canterbury Hyundai Motors in Canterbury is offering MOTs while you wait for £29.95

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering 25 per cent off the joining fee for the leisure club

■ Cliftonville Tile Centre in Thanet is offering free adhesive and grout on all orders over 15 metres

■ Mayfair Drives in Rainham is offering up to 50 per cent off paving

■ Rare Breeds Centre in Ashford has a child goes free with every paying adult. Offer on now

■ Ashford Orbital Motors in Ashford is offering servicing from £99.95 inc VAT, all makes

■ Caffyns Tunbridge Wells Motors in Tunbridge Wells is offering half price MOT with service

■ Old Sawmills furniture store in Ashford has an oak computer desk and chair promotion – various sizes, styles and leather colours, plus free banker's lamp. Only £1,295

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CLASS: Alfa Romeo's dramatic MiTo supermini proves eco motoring need not be boring motoring



BY STEVE LOADER

DON'T swap your current car just to save a few pounds on road tax.

On the other hand, Government efforts to tax 'gas guzzlers' off the road can further ease the burden on your motoring budget if you plan to downsize or go for a more fuel-efficient model.

Chancellor Alistair Darling eased the pressure a bit after an outcry induced by draconian rates due to be applied to larger cars... just as the recession clobbered the economy.

But Labour – and a Conservative government won't be any different due to existing agreements to clean up pollution – has said it will continue to drive down vehicle sizes and emissions by using tough VED (Vehicle Excise Duty) rates, based on CO2 emissions rather than fuel consumption and applying only to cars registered after March 1, 2001.

At present, you can escape paying anything if your car emits 100g/km or less and, from April 1, this benefit will apply to any car with a 130g/km or less rating, within one year of being registered. After that it will revert to £20-30 a year.

By the same token, anyone buying a serious CO2 emitter discharging 255g/km or more will



TAX EXEMPT: Vauxhall has announced an improved Vauxhall Corsa, badged with its ultra-green ecoFLEX sub-branding, that is tax exempt thanks to just 98g/km emissions

Pros and cons of road tax savings

be clobbered by a £950 charge in the first year and £435 thereafter when the new scale comes into effect – the current tax for cars in this band is £405.

Curiously, due to inconsistent emissions data on older cars, these are taxed simply at £120/year up to 1,549cc and then £185 if larger – something of a bargain for owners of older 'gas guzzlers' if they can bear higher fuel bills, opt for a £1,500-2,000 LPG (liquid petroleum gas) conversion or cover relatively few miles. The higher charge increases to £205 after April 1.

ROAD TAX BANDS

Band A (0-100g/km of CO2) – £0
Bands B and C (101-120g/km) – £35
Bands D and E (121-140g/km) – £120
Band F (141-150g/km) – £125
Band G (151-160g/km) – £150
Bands H and I (161-180g/km) – £175
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Band L (226-255g/km) – £405
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Smarter driving for better saving

BY STEVE LOADER

DOWNSIZING to a more fuel and tax efficient car must be just part of your recession-busting motorising plan.

The next stage involves smarter driving and journey planning and getting fitter by walking and cycling instead of using the car for short journeys – cold engines waste fuel and produce 60 per cent more emissions than warm ones.

Short trips also mean more servicing and engine wear – a moped or motorcycle might be a better option.

If you must drive, follow these tips from the Institute of Advanced Motorists and RAC Foundation:

- Plan your route to save strain on car and driver. Take the direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off peak if possible. Commuters should think about car sharing, Park and Ride bus schemes, or other public transport.

- Have your vehicle serviced regularly. Neglected engines waste at least 10 per cent more fuel and catalytic converters only clean emissions when properly maintained.

- Check tyres – under-inflated tyres wear faster, waste fuel, are dangerous and contribute to a growing environmental problem. Check pressures weekly.

- Obey speed limits to save and stay legal. Feather the throttle at cruising speed; 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style saves fuel.

- Accelerate briskly without racing the engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Intelligent gear changes

at modest engine speeds can save up to 15 per cent in fuel.

- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use and keep windows closed to avoid drag and wasted fuel. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and wide wheels and tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning costs fuel too, so try to use the fan and vents unassisted.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Look for low sulphur 'city' diesel or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics). Consider converting to LPG

(liquid petroleum gas) – half the price of petrol and with lower emissions.

- Think ahead – there is no point rushing and then having to brake suddenly.

- Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank to the brim and burn more fuel carrying more weight than necessary?

- Stuck in traffic? Turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions.

- For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at: <http://www.yourkenttv.co.uk/community>.



ECO-FRIENDLY: Driving more economically can also add to the savings you make from purchasing eco-friendly models like the Skoda Octavia Estate Greenline (above) or Nissan's 'Swiss army knife' Qashqai (right) – the car that can be family a hatchback, people carrier, SUV and even 4x4 if you buy a flagship model

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Corsa 3-door SRi 1.4i 16v (100PS) manual: Urban – 40.4 (7.0), Extra-urban – 61.4 (4.6), Combined – 51.4 (5.5). CO₂ emissions 129g/km. Astra Sport Hatch Sport 1.4i 16v manual: Urban – 35.3 (8.0), Extra-urban – 56.5 (5.0), Combined – 46.3 (6.1). CO₂ emissions 146g/km.

Price shown includes £2000 Vauxhall Scrappage Allowance which is dependent on the vehicle meeting the full Government Vauxhall Scrappage incentive criteria. The Government Scrappage payment applies to cars registered on or before 29.02.02 (vans on or before 28.02.02) when traded in against a new car subject to conditions and whilst Government funding applies. Models illustrated are Corsa 3-dr SRi 1.4i 16v (100PS) at £14,484 Man. Rec. OTR (offer price £9995 OTR) and Astra Sport Hatch Sport 1.4i 16v at £16,339 Man. Rec. OTR (offer price £11695* OTR). On-the-road (OTR) prices include number plates, delivery, 12 months' Government Vehicle Excise Duty, DVLA new vehicle first registration fee of £55 and VAT at 17.5%. Excludes fuel and insurance. Offers are available to private individuals, and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. Offers apply to selected new vehicles ordered or registered between 01.01.10 and 28.02.10, and are subject to status, eligibility, terms and conditions. Offers are available on selected Retailer stocks only. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, unless stated otherwise, and are available at participating Retailers only. Excludes Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

BY STEVE LOADER

FUEL prices continue to be volatile – no help to drivers as Britain tries to claw its way out of recession.

The UK's biggest supplier of company cars reckons this also comes on top of motorists being suckered by costly motoring myths.

Lex Autolease associate director Chris Chandler said: "We own over 300,000 vehicles and some of the feedback we receive from drivers shows that a lot of bad habits have crept in, due to myths passed down from one colleague to another or through friends and family."

The firm's 'Myths Hit List' is:

'Premium fuel is good for your car every now and again'

It is only suitable for high performance cars needing superior fuel for efficient running – the higher cost is repaid by better mpg. Drivers using non-performance cars should stick to ordinary unleaded and diesel.

Another myth suggests supermarket fuel is poorer quality than that from oil companies' forecourts, but they often come from the same source, so you're paying more for the brand and any additives included.

It's best to fit your new tyres to the front axle'

Actually, they should be fitted to the rear. More grip on the rear axle improves stability on slippery roads and could prevent a spin.

Drivers are also more used to worn tyres on the front, because most modern cars are front wheel drive and wear front treads faster than the rears; switching part-worn rears to the front maintains a balance that the driver is used to.

'Allow the car to warm up before driving off'

The engine will warm up faster, use less fuel and pump out less CO2 if you drive off immediately, rather than leave it to idle for a while. In winter, this also helps the car heater warm faster, though windscreens must be fully defrosted before setting off.

'Running the fuel tank near to empty helps to clean it'

Motoring myths shattered – more savings pocketed



ON A ROLL: If you are buying two new tyres, they should be fitted to the back wheels say experts, as most modern cars are front-wheel drive, like the latest Vauxhall Astra and Mazda3 pictured here – new additions to the family hatchback sector.

Fuel tanks do not 'self-clean'. It is more likely that you will misjudge your next fill-up and risk seizing up your engine or other components; driving with little or no fuel can be almost as damaging to a vehicle as putting in the wrong fuel. Fill up as quickly as possible when your warning light appears.

'Filling up slows down your car'

Partially true. A heavy fuel load impacts upon fuel efficiency and braking distances, but acceleration and top speed is barely compromised by a full tank.

'No claims protection insurance protects my premium if I have a crash'

Standard insurances only protect the discount you would have received at the end of a claim-free year. If you have a claim, insurance companies can increase your overall premium, despite having a no claims protection policy, because you are an increased insurance risk.

Admittedly, the company has a vested interest in the final point:

'Leasing is more expensive than buying'

Many businesses and motorists fail to properly calculate the true cost of ownership. List price alone is a red herring, and ignores true running costs: finance, depreciation, maintenance and insurance.

All such costs can be better captured and budgeted through a lease deal.

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Last call for Scrappage?

BY STEVE LOADER

AFTER a stuttering start the Government's £2,000 Scrappage incentive accelerated into a big success last year.

So much so that the initial £300 million fund needed a 50 per cent top-up last autumn to avoid running out before the proposed end of the scheme in March this year.

But money is dwindling again, and it is difficult to read how the Government will react to another top-up or an extension.

It could be simply delaying a decision so that it can maximise the political mileage ahead of the spring general election, but it is also questionable whether the scheme does much for UK PLC or its balance of payments – foreign-based carmakers and their workforces have been the main beneficiaries.

So get your order in now before the cash



HIT: Scrappage made the frugal Hyundai i10 hatchback one of the UK's top sellers



NEW LOOK: Scrappage has tempted many people out of old cars and into sharp-suited affordable new ones like the Chevrolet Cruze

runs out if you fancy swapping your banger.

The donor car must have been registered before August 31, 1999 and your name must have been on the V5 'logbook' for 12 months before the date your new car order is placed.

Carmakers like the scheme, though quietly annoyed that they would be expected to contribute half of each £2,000 Government Scrappage grant and that the Treasury would claw back some of its money through VAT on each car sale.

But they have seen that they can use Scrappage to buy market share and keep car plants running through the recession, and some brands have been chipping in extra cash on top of their £1,000 per unit as well as more specification and zero per cent finance – though this is no big deal when interest rates are so low.

This also indicates how keen dealers are to

do business, so don't be despondent if you're not in a position to take advantage of Scrappage; with the exception of city cars and superminis, you should get a hefty discount on most new cars without a banger to scrap.

If you have been out of the car market for a while though, do your research. You will have heard that diesel cars now outsell petrol, but that is not the full picture.

They cost more, and the extra weight can be wearing and intrusive in the smaller cars most in demand now, and you need to cover many miles to recover the extra outlay.

Meanwhile, petrol is making a comeback with lighter, small capacity turbocharged engines able to deliver diesel pulling power and lower emissions.

You might also consider a hybrid, but these cost more and this must also be weighed against the mileage you intend to cover.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Northgate Alfa Motors in Canterbury is offering fixed price servicing for cars three-years plus, for example bronze care, £109

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering a free glass of wine or a pint with any main course in the Victory Pub

■ KOS Media is offering a saving of up to £40 on Slumberdown Memory Foam Mattress Toppers

■ FG Barnes Motors in Maidstone is offering £250 worth of accessories with Network Q purchases

■ KOS Media is offering the Ewbank Evolution II for £24.99, save £5 on RRP

■ Ashford Orbital Motors in Ashford is offering a winter check for £19.95 inc VAT, with free de-icer, ice scraper and screen wash

■ KOS Media is offering a saving of £30 on the leader MD Electronic Typewriter – only £169.99

■ Caffyns Tunbridge Wells Motors in Tunbridge Wells is offering an MOT for only £35

■ Sink Ports kitchens and bathrooms store in Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off kitchens

■ Maidstone Kia Motors in Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off all accessories

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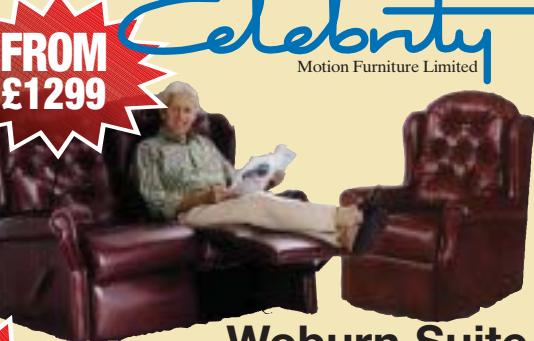


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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY HAYLEY ANDREWS



GLEE
E4, 9pm, Monday

GLEE is an American-born musical television series that has US audiences captivated, gripped and addicted.

Now it has come to our screens courtesy of E4 and it seems it's our turn to be wowed.

A 'glee club' is a show choir that performs jazzed-up pop songs and show tunes, often accompanied by choreography.

Glee is set at the fictional William McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio, where Spanish teacher Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) takes the failing club, which is attended only by a handful of misfits and geeks.

Funny, abrasive, and absolutely adorable, each episode is interspersed with relevant musical numbers.

The plots resemble those of soap operas, but Glee stands out from other shows of its genre because of its quirky sense of humour, which makes light of topics that other serious dramas might get in a flap about.

The characters are wonderfully awkward, likable and in turn ridiculous. Many are pretty clueless and even the bad-guy characters have some spark and life that makes you want to watch.

Jane Lynch plays the school's drill sergeant-style cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester, with quips like: "I will go to the animal shelter and get you a kitty cat. I will let you fall in love with that kitty cat and then on some dark, cold night I will steal away into your home and punch you in the face" and "I will vomit down your back".

You can't help but laugh at her delightful nastiness.

Taking the show seriously is a mistake. Glee is not another High School Musical and is far from the disaster



SCHOOL'S OUT: E4 have taken Globe Golden nominated Glee and brought it to UK screens

that was ITV's Britannia High; rather it is a parody of such shows.

When gloomy EastEnders and tired Corrie are bringing you down, this serves as a tonic.

It's deliberately cheesy, purposely cringeworthy and mocks high-school politics.

The show is a celebration of individuality and of the misfit, which in the age of perfect-people Gossip Girl is revitalizing and delightful.

The fact the series was nominated for four 2010 Golden Globe Awards tells you more than I can.

Anything uplifting in today's grey society is more than welcome, if you ask me.

Fans of Glee are referred to as 'gleeks' and, as a self-confessed gleek, I would advise you to test the water.

Just don't overanalyse – take it for what it is and enjoy.

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

IT'S important to trust your instincts when it comes to a creative project. Although it might seem weird, it is compelling. Who cares if it hasn't been tried before? Your initial attempts will be disappointing, but keep going. You'll learn something new with each try.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

YOU have a tendency to cut yourself off from the group when you become depressed. Joining a group project will restore your self-confidence. It's flattering to see people respond so well to your ideas. Besides, most people love the way you inject humour into the proceedings.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)

THINK up some strategies to boost your career. Meeting with an executive can have exciting results. Going back to school, getting a license or attending a job fair will get the ball rolling. If you're going to progress, you need to take matters into your own hands.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)

WORKING as part of a team will yield better results than trying to go it alone. You have good ideas, but aren't sure how to make practical use of them. That's where your partner will come in. Although they can be rather bossy at times they know what they're talking about.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)

MAKE arrangements to go on a long-distance trip. Last year you craved excitement and adventure. Unfortunately, you had your nose stuck to the grindstone. Now you have a great opportunity to escape. You could find a terrific deal that will allow you to take an extended break.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 22)

IT'S necessary to be a little secretive, particularly when it comes to finances. If you get an extra sum of money stay mum about it. Normally, you have no problem sharing your good fortune with others. This time you've been longing to indulge your sensual desires.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

GETTING specialised or technological knowledge will improve your employment prospects. As a general rule you prefer to focus on the big picture. This has gotten you to a certain level, but now you're ready to move to higher ground. This requires getting better qualifications.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

FINDING an outlet for your creative talent is critical to your happiness. You're always looking for ways to be helpful to others. Now it's time to serve your own needs. If that means relinquishing some of your household responsibilities or relaxing your standards, so be it.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

YOU will get fame and acclaim for your ideas. Normally, you prefer to sit in the shadows watching how things grow and develop, but now you're ready to take centre stage. Be ready to face-off with a stubborn man who thinks his methods are superior to everyone else's.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)

IT'S time to sort out your finances, as dreary as that sounds. You've never been especially materialistic, which is admirable. Still, there are people relying on you for support. The simple act of getting your affairs in order can be of tremendous benefit to those closest to you.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

FINDING ways to spend more time at home is critical to your happiness. You're tired of commuting long distances and going on extended business trips. If this means finding a different job or working from home then start making your plans now. Your family will be thrilled.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

TAKING a short trip will give your reputation an unexpected boost. Maybe you'll get a chance to show off your creative ability. It's even possible you'll go on a job interview and make a favourable impression on the company president. This is just the sort of ego boost you need.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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**PROPERTY NEWS****House prices up for sixth time, says bank**

IN its latest survey of the UK housing market, Halifax reports that in December, house prices increased for the sixth consecutive month.

The rise took the value of a typical home to £169,042, up 9.4 per cent – or £14,552 – on the low of April 2009, and 1.1 per cent higher on an annual basis.

Taking the three-month-on-three-month measure, prices rose for the second successive quarter; in the final three months of 2009, the average value of a home increased 3.5 per cent, marking the biggest quarterly jump since 2006.

The lender comments that significant interest rate cuts have “markedly reduced the burden of servicing a mortgage” and helped to stimulate demand, albeit from a low base.

However, Halifax expects house prices to remain flat in 2010 as prospects for depend on how the UK economy performs, and whether there is a significant increase in the supply of properties.

By way of comparison, Nationwide recently reported that the average house price rose by 0.4 per cent in December, compared to a month earlier, to £162,103. According to the building society, the increase took the annual rate of gain to 5.9 per cent.

No repayment fee for buy-to-let borrowers

LANDLORDS with cash to spare will be interested in Bradford & Bingley's offer to waive early repayment charges,

From February 1 buy-to-let borrowers can pay off a capital lump sum, or redeem their mortgages early, at no extra cost.

A similar waiver proved popular last year and its reintroduction forms part of a strategy to wind down the mortgage books of both lenders, as they will eventually be liquidated.

For landlords tempted to remortgage, lettings agent Leaders has this week reported “a small but significant increase in buy-to-let mortgage products”.

However, proposals for the Financial Services Authority to begin regulating the sector this year could stifle recovery in what has become a severely contracted market.

According to Paragon Mortgages, the number of buy-to-let products available has collapsed to about 190, with 94 per cent of loans disappearing since the onset of the credit crisis.



Best-buy mortgage table shows rise in competition

■ BY NICK AMES

THE Alliance & Leicester, which has branches across the county, has been named the most consistently competitive mortgage lender during the final quarter of 2009, according to research by mortgage search software firm, Evaluate Technologies.

A&L replaced HSBC as the UK's most consistently competitive mortgage lender during the quarter, despite having failed to register any of its home loans in best buy tables during the previous quarter.

Analysis

In the analysis, A&L achieved a score of 23 and beat off rivals including First Direct on 19 points, Woolwich on 15 and fourth with 14 points was HSBC.

However, Royal Bank of Scotland and subsidiary NatWest failed to put in a “best buy” appearance, as did Halifax and Cheltenham & Gloucester, said Evaluate.

Julie Speed, national accounts director at Evaluate Technologies said: “The changes taking place at the top of the best-buy tables indicate a good degree of competition in the mortgage market.

“This is going to be key to supporting the property market in 2010.

“Brokers will have been particularly pleased to see Alliance & Leicester's emergence, showing that lenders do value the intermediary market.”

**COMPETITION:** Alliance and Leicester sealed the deal for the most consistently competitive mortgage lender

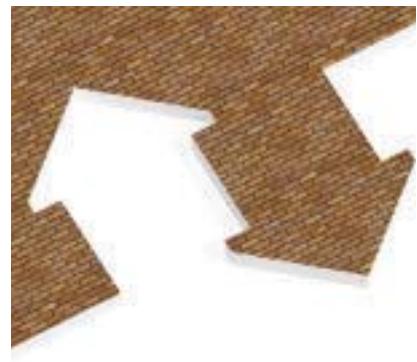
Meanwhile A&L, along with Abbey and Bradford & Bingley, is set to be re-named Santander later this year.

Santander, which is the second largest bank-group in the world after HSBC, became a

household name in the UK when it acquired Abbey for £9.5 billion, back in 2004.

In July 2008, it acquired A&L and a few months later, it took ownership of B&B's savings business and branch network.

Unemployment to hit house prices



HOUSING analysts Hometrack expects the housing market in England to feel the effects of rising unemployment in the months ahead.

The housing intelligence firm is predicting a one per cent fall in the average cost of a home in 2010, despite a rise of 0.1 per cent in December, which followed on from a 0.2 per cent increase in November.

However, December also saw the number of potential buyers entering the market fall by 2.2 per cent, the first decline since January 2009.

This month's increase eased the annual rate of decline to 1.9 per cent.

However, Hometrack's director of research, Richard Donnell, is convinced that rising unemployment and slow growth in household

incomes will take their toll next year. He concedes that a shortage of homes for sale will help to underpin prices, but expects demand to be the deciding factor in whether they rise or fall.

Meanwhile, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors is taking a more optimistic view and predicting a one per cent to two per cent rise in UK house prices in 2010, despite a “flat” employment market and continued caution among lenders.

According to the RICS, supply should continue to increase in the early part of next year but will struggle to keep pace with demand.

The body also estimates that transactions will rise from between 55,000 and 60,000 per month in 2009, to 70,000 by the end of 2010.

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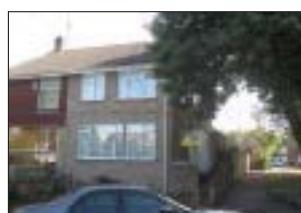
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MOTORS NEWS



Goodbye to scrappage deal – hello swappage

SCRAPPAGE grants are fast running out, so we can expect carmakers to find other incentives to maintain market momentum.

Under Toyota's new 'Swappage' scheme, customers can still snap up a Scrappage-style £2,000 saving on an eligible new Yaris, Auris or Avensis (pictured) if they trade in their old car. It must be seven to ten-years-old – registered between March 1, 2000 and February 28, 2003 (52-plate) – but it will not have to go to the crusher, as under the Scrappage scheme.



Audi's precocious baby car is a guaranteed hit

EXCITEMENT generated by Audi's new A1 baby car has led to a pre-launch trophy – What Car? magazine's Reader Award – Most Exciting Car.

The A1 will not even be unveiled in production form until early March at the Geneva Motor Show.

What Car? editor Steve Fowler also expects it to be a contender for the mag's 2011 Car of the Year Award, saying: "A funky small car with an Audi badge on the nose and aimed directly at the (BMW) Mini can't fail to succeed."



Citroën goes posh with its new year C1 range

MORE luxuries are predicted in small cars as economy motoring and downsizing gathers way.

Citroën illustrates the point with a posh 2010 version of its C1 city car. The new VTR+ trim level (from £9,345) replaces plain old VTR, highlighted by the 'Leather Pack': part leather/part Alcantara upholstery, steering wheel and gear knob.

For tightened budgets, the C1 line-up starts at £8,495 and the Splash Special Edition (from £9,045) continues with air con and remote locking as standard.



MONSTER TRUCK: Skoda reckons there are many Yeti customers out there, particularly in the new 'crossover' sector identified by Nissan's Qashqai which has proved popular

Yeti 'find' can cash in on Nissan's Qashqai appeal

SKODA has headed off into the rough stuff with the new Yeti.

It may be smart marketing to name a rugged looking SUV (sports utility vehicle) after the fabled Himalayan Abominable Snowman, but SUVs are no longer hot property in a depressed and more environmentally-aware market. You wonder too if it will find favour with the Czech marque's hitherto conservative customer base.

Besides, those needing a wheeled holdall were already catered for by the clever Roomster mini-MPV. It's cheaper, roughly the same length as its new sister and you can even buy the rugged Scout version, though it comes with front-wheel drive only.

But then Skoda expects most Yeti sales (from £13,775) to be the same format rather than the full 4x4 versions also available from £17,220.

And it reckons there are many Yeti conquest customers out there, particularly in the new 'crossover' sector identified by Nissan with the Qashqai, attracting new customers and transforming that marque's image at a stroke.

The five-door Yeti looks more upright than the Qashqai, but classy and robust and will sell

ROAD TEST

SKODA YETI

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

mostly with its mainstay VW diesel engines, though there is a 105bhp 1.2-litre petrol turbo with lots of urge and modest consumption.

The one to avoid is the 160bhp 1.8-litre petrol engine fitted to the 4x4 tested here; it's a great drive with plenty of go and refinement, but thirsty against the diesels.

It is hard to fault the Yeti otherwise.

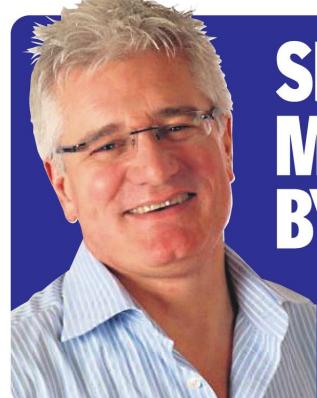
As you would demand from a car that might go off-roading, the cabin never creaks or groans or shows signs of poor construction or quality.

It is nicely understated and typically well-organised with clever storage such as the collapsible boot bin. The cloth upholstery is a bit drab – leather seating is a tempting option – but ride and comfort is high.

Even rear seats rake for extra lounging appeal and all three can be tumbled, arranged or even removed individually for varied and ultimate load capacity.

The Yeti delivers excellent on-road composure too; from the high 'command' driving position you get a great view without the cornering lean suffered by many lofty vehicles.

So, the Qashqai faces its toughest competition yet and in a style that offers a genuine, certainly not abominable alternative.



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08 58 NEW CORSA 1.2 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DR ICE BLUE 4000 MILES.....	£8995
08 58 ASTRA 1.8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C ESTATE SILVER 7000 MILES.....	£8995
08 58 CHEVROLET AVEO LT AUTO PAS AIR/C TURQUOISE 1900 MILES.....	£7995
08 58 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 1800 MILES.....	£8995
08 58 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 3000 MILES.....	£8995
08 58 RENAULT CLIO 1.6 EXPRESSION 3 DR AUTO PAS 750 MILES.....	£9495
08 58 FORD FOCUS 1.6 S DYNAMIQUE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DR BLACK 6000 MILES.....	£10995
08 58 TOYOTA YARIS T3 AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DR BLUE 6000 MILES.....	£9995
08 58 KANGOO AUTHENTIQUE 1.4 AUTO PAS AIR/C MET BLUE 8000 MILES.....	£9995

COUPES & CONVERTIBLES

09 FORD FOCUS CC CONVERTIBLE AUTO PAS ALLOYS RED 4000 MILES.....	£16995
08 58 PEUGEOT 207 SPORT CC 1.6 AUTO ALL BLACK LEATHER 2000 MILES.....	£15995
08 58 MICRA 1.6 CONVERTIBLE CC ACENTA AUTO PAS LATTE 4000 MILES.....	£11995
08 58 MICRA 1.6 CONVERTIBLE CC ACENTA AUTO PAS PACIFIC 2000 MILES.....	£10995
08 57 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS FLAME 6000 MILES.....	£13495
07 57 MEGANE 1.6 CONVERTIBLE CC SPORT AUTO PAS INFERNO 7000 MILES.....	£10995
07 57 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 5000 MILES.....	£13495
06 56 MICRA 1.6 CONVERTIBLE AUTO PAS ALLOYS 1200 MILES.....	£9995
06 56 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS GREY 16000 MILES.....	£10995
06 56 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 19000 MILES.....	£10495
06 56 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS SILVER 23000 MILES.....	£9995
06 56 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 14000 MILES.....	£10995
06 06 MICRA 1.6 ESENNA CONVERT AUTO PAS SILVER 28000 MILES.....	£9995
06 06 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 21000 MILES.....	£9995
06 06 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 10000 MILES.....	£10495
05 05 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1.6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 38000 MILES.....	£8495

FIAT

06 56 FIAT PANDA ELEGANZA 1242CC 5D AUTO PAS BLACK 16000 MILES.....	£5995
07 57 FIESTA STYLE 1.6 CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 19000 MILES.....	£7995
07 57 FUSION ZETEC 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR BLACK 8000 MILES.....	£8995
07 07 FUSION ZETEC 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR GREEN 4000 MILES.....	£9495
06 56 FUSION ZETEC 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR BLUE 8000 MILES.....	£7495
06 56 FIESTA STYLE 1.6 CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 13000 MILES.....	£6995
03 53 FUSION 2.1 4 AUTO PAS AIR BLACK 4600 MILES.....	£3995

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07 57 FIESTA STYLE 1.6 CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 19000 MILES.....	£7995
07 57 FUSION ZETEC 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR BLACK 8000 MILES.....	£8995
07 07 FUSION ZETEC 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR GREEN 4000 MILES.....	£9495
06 56 FUSION ZETEC 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR BLUE 8000 MILES.....	£7495
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03 53 FUSION 2.1 4 AUTO PAS AIR BLACK 4600 MILES.....	£3995

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08 09 NEW FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 4000 MILES.....	£11495
08 57 NEW FOCUS 1.6 STYLE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 7000 MILES.....	£10495
07 57 FOCUS 1.6 STYLE AUTO PAS AIR/C MOONDUST SILVER 7000 MILES.....	£8995
07 57 FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C CALLOUS GREEN 5000 MILES.....	£8995
07 57 FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C ALLOYS SEA GREEN 13000 MILES.....	£8995
06 56 FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C OCEAN BLUE 8000 MILES.....	£7995
06 56 FORD FOCUS GHIA AUTO PAS 5D AIR/C SEA GREY 13000 MILES.....	£7995
06 56 FOCUS 1.6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1.6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1.6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1.6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1.6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06 FOCUS 1.6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£7995
03 03 FOCUS 2.0 GHIA AUTO 5 DOOR PAS AIR/C BLACK LEATHER 58000 MILES.....	£4995

FORD FOCUS ESTATES

07 57 FOCUS 1.6 STYLE ESTATE AUTO AIR/C MOONDUST SILVER 1900 MILES.....	£8995
07 07 FOCUS 2.0 GHIA 5 DR AUTO PAS SEA GREY AIR 17000 MILES.....	£8995
06 56 FOCUS 2.0 GHIA ESTATE CAR AUTO PAS TONIC BLUE 23000 MILES.....	£8995
06 56 FOCUS 2.0 GHIA AUTO ESTATE PAS AIR/C TONIC BLUE 18000 MILES.....	£8495
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06 06 FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS 11000 MILES.....	£7495

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03 03 CORSA 1.4 DESIGN 3 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 14000 MILES.....	£4995

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06 06 DAIHATSU CHARADE 1.0 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 12000 MILES.....
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07 57 MAZDA 6 TS AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/C 5 DR SILVER 17000 MILES.....
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06 56 MAZDA 6 TS AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/C 5 DR SEA GREY 16000 MILES.....
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08 08 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS MET GREY 5000 MILES.....
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07 57 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS MET BLUE 5000 MILES.....
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07 57 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS YELLOW 9000 MILES.....
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06 56 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1.6 GSI AUTO PAS 5 DR SILVER 7000 MILES.....
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06 06 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1.6 GSI AUTO PAS 5 DR SILVER 12000 MILES.....
£8995
06 06 HYUNDAI PICARDO 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS 5 DR BLACK 2000 MILES.....
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06 06 HYUNDAI PICARDO 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS 5 DR BLACK 2000 MILES.....
£8995

TOYOTA
08 08 TOYOTA YARIS T3 AUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 8000 MILES.....
£8995
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USED CAR ROUND-UP:

OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

FORD FOCUS



BRITAIN'S favourite car. Or is it? Some say it's No1 through Ford's formidable market share. Fair point, but the Focus is also great to drive, practical, well-made and blessed with good engines. For second-hand buyers there is a fantastic choice of power – including the rapid ST – trim levels and body styles: a smart saloon and estate plus a coupe convertible. The car's popularity and ordinary looks are a weakness though and reason enough for some buyers to look elsewhere.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

FAMILY HATCHBACKS

WANT to downsize yet still run a car that does it all? Start shopping for a family hatchback; it seats five, can be crammed like a small van and represents a good balance of space, flexibility and economy... providing you don't go for the 'hot hatch' version. Competition is tough in this sector too, so there are few duds to beware of. Our trio here are affordable and should each give excellent service even if they offer differing propositions on street credibility – the Corolla was axed primarily for its dull image.

TOYOTA COROLLA



TOYOTA chopped the Corolla in 2007 in favour of the Auris, but the latter has all the same virtues and disadvantages. More than any other model, the Corolla made Toyota the world's No1 carmaker – it was affordable and durable, but a little dull. There is plenty of engine and body choice though and even racy versions, though the car pretty much does what it says on the tin. Corolla prices have eased too with its perception as a 'deleted' model.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

MAZDA3



MAZDA'S link with Ford means that a lot of Focus resided beneath the skin of the first and newly-replaced Mazda3 and that means neat handling. But the Mazda stands out visually from its ubiquitous half-sister, a fact not lost on used car buyers looking for something distinctive. The '3' is mostly found as a capacious hatchback, but there is also a sporty saloon. Engines are lively, in line with Mazda's sporty 'Zoom-Zoom' image – look out for the MPS hot hatch.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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Government incentive £1,000 Offer price £4,995

On the road price £10,245 **FIAT-eco plus** BONUS £2,250
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At Fiat we have a saying, "Less is Genius". It means we believe in giving people the chance to buy great looking, economical and more ecologically friendly cars at affordable prices. With the Government scrappage scheme and Fiat's eco-plus Bonus the Fiat Panda 1.1 Active Eco is just £4,995 and the Fiat Grande Punto 1.4 Active 3 door is just £6,995. So scrap all other plans and proceed immediately to your local Fiat dealer.

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Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km): Fiat Panda 1.1 Active Eco, Urban 42.8 (6.6), Extra Urban 68.4 (4.1), Combined 56.5 (5.0), CO₂ emissions of 119g/km; Grande Punto 1.4 Active, Urban 37.7 (7.5), Extra Urban 56.5 (5.0), Combined 47.9 (5.9), CO₂ emissions of 139g/km.

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data – Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litres/100km): The All New Astra Range: urban – from 28.8 (9.9) to 49.6 (5.7), Extra-urban – from 50.4 (5.6) to 68.9 (4.1), Combined – from 39.8 (7.1) to 60.1 (4.7). CO₂ Emissions from 167 to 124g/km.

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5dr, Hatchback, Met. Red, FSH, 1 Owner, 30,000 Miles, £7995.00
01234 567890

Lineage
Approx. 20 words

FORD FOCUS LX 1.6
01/Y, 5dr, Hatchack, Metallic Red, Full Service History, 1 Owner, Power Steering, Electric Windows, ABS, 30,000 Miles, £9,500.00
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WOMEN seeking men

MAKE IT LAST Slim female, 25, 5'10", long brown hair and blue eyes, caring and social, likes clubs, cinema, seeking a kind male, 30-45 for a relationship. Box 461558

MATCH OF THE DAY! Fun-to-be-with, blonde female, 25, 5'2", a woman who loves football! Enjoys going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded male, to be her soulmate. Box 446494

NOT YOUR BROWN-EYED GIRL... But..-..Eye..-ed..brunette, 27, 5'1", loves films, walking, darts, pool, singing, my time! Looking for a honest guy with GSOH, to get to know. Box 880105

LOOKIN' A GUY WHO'S EASY ON THE EYE! 25yr old female, 5'8", medium-curvy build, NS, enjoys reading, painting, cinema, walks, WLTM tall, attractive male, 23-32 for friendship, maybe LTR. Box 442644

FANCY A Cuddle? Loving single mum, 29, shoulder length black hair, brown eyes, 5'3", slim and sexy, part-time carer, looking for reliable, loving male. Canterbury. Box 454326

SOUND GOOD? Social lady, 29, likes walks, swimming, gyms, like to meet a man, 30-55 for lots of fun. Brighton. Box 463984

IS ANYONE OUT THERE? 31yr old easygoing, independent female, WLTM cuddly falls to enjoy the finer things in life, with LTR with the right person. Box 879931

A FAIRYTALE ENDING! Princess Fiona, 34, looking to meet her Shrek, 5'8", short brown, blonde hair, blue eyes, large build, seeks romantic caring guy for friendship, maybe more! Box 877957

HORSES FOR COURSES... Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2", blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013

HAPPY DAYS! Attractive, fun-loving female, 35, 5'4", size 12, dark hair, with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTM intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734

FEAST YOUR EYES ON ME... Hello I'm Andrea, 35, petite 5'3", shoulder length curly hair, enjoys eating out, cinema and I'm looking for a friendship and possible long term relationship. Box 453039

SEALED WITH A KISS Petite lady, 36, long hair, blue eyes, single mum, enjoys holidays, walking and dining, laughing, seeks loyal, loving man for friendship and more. Box 453079

STARRY NIGHTS Hello I'm Sarah, single mum from Kent, brown hair, enjoy swimming nights in/out looking for a caring man to share the best thing in life. Box 878378

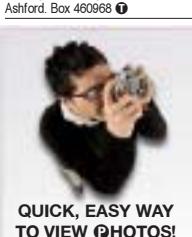
GROWN OLD WITH ME Single mum, 37 yrs old, slim build, honest, kind and caring. I'm looking for LTR, love and romance with nice guy in Maidstone area. Box 880164

LOVE TO LOVE YOU Lovely female, 36, 5'4", medium/curvy build, blonde hair, blue eyes, own house, loves walking, going out, the usual! Seeking male for long-term/serious relationship. Box 438102

HISTORIC MEETING? Mum of three, 36, long mousy hair, blue eyes, interested in historical places, music, eating out, seeks kind, caring, genuine male 36-49, non-smoker for LTR. Box 440693

SEIZE THE DAY Loving female, 36, 5'4", brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666

CUTE AS CAN BE Cute single mum of four, 38, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship, possibly romance. Box 897983



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Mobile: Register your number with us & send by SMS to 07788 203 737. Enter P2P as subject. MMS - network charges apply.

SHOW ME HEAVEN

Black lady, 39, old, enjoys swimming, films and bird watching. Fairly new to the area, WLTM a male for friendship and maybe romance. Box 441608

A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE

Lovely, glossy blonde, 39 yr old, petite, bubbly and loving, enjoys theatre, music and eating out. WLTM a professional, loving and tactile male for a relationship. Box 442551

TAKE A LITTLE TIME

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and TLC. Seaford. Box 444366

MAKES ME HEAVEN

Professional female, 41, 5'5", brown hair/eyes, likes country pubs and walks, looking for a gent, 42-55, to share a happy future. Gillingham Box 462538

FOR A RELATIONSHIP?

Shy but confident-once known female, a mum, 40, likes socialising, tennis, walks, swimming; seeks gent with similar interests to find hopeful love with. Box 452106

TLC ON OFFER

Bubbly, happy, outgoing 41yr old female, enjoy life to the full, like writing, walking, watching DVDs, WLTM like-minded, happy-go-lucky, clean male for friendship and more. Box 459271

LOVE IS ALL AROUND

Happy-go-lucky, blonde, 42, blue eyes, hard-working, love cuttings, looking for a nice, genuine guy for relationship. Bromley Box 454517

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LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL Happy-go-lucky, fun-loving male, 42, 5ft, brown eyes, medium build, likes nights out/in with a can of coke, seeking similar female for companionship. Box 447162

BE THERE NOW Old romantic, loyal, honest, 43, 5ft, brown hair, blue eyes, likes most things. WLTM female to settle down with and find love. Box 443410

FALL FOR ME Single male, dark hair, blue eyes, 56", 44, easy going, loving, likes cooking, holidays, music, countryside, cinema, seeking lady 34-57 for a loving relationship. Ashford. Box 464746

COSY NIGHTS Male, 45, divorced, 2 sons grown up, 5'6" of slim build, with brown hair/eyes, attractive. I like walks, socialising, meals out etc. Hastings, WLTM genuine lady. Box 458579

HOLIDAYS Young 47 year old chap, single, 6ft, 5'11", slim/medium build, likes animals, cooking, beach/countryside walks, driving, WLTM loving, caring lady to share good times together. Box 459280

IT'S A SHORE THING Genuine male, 58, 5ft, GSOH, slim/medium build like animals, cooking, beach/countryside walks, driving, WLTM loving, caring lady to share good times together. Box 449280

FEELS LIKE HOME Self employed male, 54, tall, divorced, sees female for friendship. Box 180307

LOVE ME, LOVE MY TROLLEY Tall, dark, divorced male, 59, likes most muscidiung/entertainment, seeking female to share my Tesco trolley for friendship, hopefully more... Collette, please call again... leave contact details! Box 444251

TRY ANYTHING ONCE Tall chap, 44, medium build. Interests: walking, reading, swimming. I would love to meet a nice, honest and caring lady. Box 445456

SHARE THE GOOD LIFE Professional male, 32, 6ft, medium build, likes football and snooker, WLTM a female with a great personality for everlasting happiness. Box 446121

HURT NO MORE Honest sincere male, 35, 5ft, blonde hair/blue eyes, slim, likes the usual pubs, clubs, meals, golf and films, seek my lady for honest relationship. Aylesford. Box 442866

TAKE THE PLUNGE Slim, sporty male, 35, 6ft, blue hair/blue eyes, slim, likes sports, football, pubs, clubs, romantic night/in, seeking a caring lady for a ltr. Aylesford. Box 450136

BRIGHTENING UP Cuddly lady, 50, enjoys walks along the beach, nights out and in with a quiet bottle of wine, seeks man to love forever. Box 449524

LOVELY BUBBLY Short 51yr old professional lady, likes history, films and reading, seeking a genuine gent, 45-55 with gsoh to enjoy evenings out, stimulating conversations and fun. Box 461982

JUST IMAGINE Petite, bubbly, friendly, easygoing single mom, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, music and genuine good company. Box 434089

DO YOU LOVE IT? Petite, 49, 5'4", slim, brown hair, blue eyes, seeking a mate for love and for friendship, maybe more. Box 482688

MAKING CONFIDENCE 47yr old chap, Brighton based, have my own company and I enjoy most things in life, seeks a fresh start with a genuine local lady. Box 463263

ENDLESS LOVE Athletic male, 35, 5ft, professional, looking for a fun, lively and outgoing female to enjoy life with, gsoh is a must! Box 865555

BOTTLE OF WINE Hi there, I'm an easygoing male, 35, 5ft, medium build, brown hair. I'm based in Brighton and enjoy seeing friends, drinks, cinema, walks. Box 450165

JUST ASK Fun-loving male, 36, seeking a mate for share good times with, and maybe develop beyond. Maidstone. Box 863863

SENSE OF HUMOUR He MUST **BE** A VERY young looking male, 52, slim, brown hair and eyes, 57, looking for a nice young lady over 30 for romance and good times together. Eastbourne. Box 460005

LOVING AND LAUGHTER Male, 55, 6ft, good sense of humour looking for a soul mate and best friend as well as a lover. Must be single and honest. Box 863979

MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE Genuine male, 35, 5ft, fair hair, blue eyes, toned body, looking to meet an attractive guy for fun times and friendship. Box 861162

FANCY A DANCE? Caring gentle guy, 45, slim, 5ft, short hair, looking for guys in the Medway area for fun. Rochester. Box 458151

PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING Understanding, caring, single, 54, male, 5ft10, medium build, grey hair, enjoys beach walks, cinema/theatre, bowling, darts, looking for lasting relationship. Canterbury. Box 462892

STARTING ANEW Professional 42 year old, recently separated after a 23 year marriage. Likes the finer things in life, looking for someone who wants a relationship. Kent. Box 462849

TEXT REPLY: For your protection, you will not be allowed to swap contact details until you have exchanged five messages each. **GUIDELINES:** Private individuals seeking long-term, monogamous relationships may advertise in yourkentdating. We suggest that ads contain a self-description, age range, and lifestyle description. We reserve the right to refuse or edit any ad for any reason. Ads may not be submitted by persons younger than 18 years of age for publication in yourkentdating. Also, no ads will be published seeking persons younger than 18 years of age.

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LET'S FIND OUT! Hi, I'm a fun-loving, kind, passionate lady, 44, 5ft5, with a wicked sense of humour, looking for friendship and what ever evolves from there. Kent. Box 444763

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU? I'm a fun-loving, kind, passionate lady, 44, 5ft5, with a wicked sense of humour, looking for friendship and what ever evolves from there. Kent. Box 443742

HOW ABOUT TODAY? Looking for love and relationship with nice, genuine woman. I'm 42, 5ft8, brown hair/blue eyes, enjoys cycling, films, eating in and out. Kent. Box 443928

STARTING ANEW Professional 42 year old, recently separated after a 23 year marriage. Likes the finer things in life, looking for someone who wants a relationship. Kent area. Box 465884

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PART-TIME BOOKKEEPER

Conversant with duties of Company Secretary

Part-time bookkeeper required for family business and Charitable Foundation. We have an extensive property portfolio in South East England and France, and the Foundation also runs a large community Art Centre in Chatham.

The successful applicant will be a confident, self-motivated and experienced person able to produce forecasts as required, quarterly financial reports, draft year end accounts to enable Accountants to prepare year end Tax Returns, Annual Returns for Companies House and the Charity Commission, payroll, profit and loss, etc. A good working knowledge of Sage accounts software essential. Car driver preferred as you will be required to work in two offices. 24 hours pw over 4 days. Able to commence work February 2010.

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Whitehouse Maidstone is looking for a fully skilled technician preferably with Chrysler Jeep or Hyundai experience.
Salary is negotiable with on target bonus offered together with 22 days holiday per annum.
To apply or for more information call Dennis Crighton on 01622 686864 or send your CV to Whitehouse Maidstone, 1-17 The Broadway, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8QX.

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We are a highly successful and ambitious school. As part of the Building Schools for the Future and transforming learning initiative our school has undergone dramatic change. Our staff needs reflect that and to ensure that our students receive the best support we are currently seeking to employ:

EXAMINATIONS SECRETARY

£7,498 to £8,425 p.a. 20 hours per week

Term time plus support for examination results

Salary Scale Kent Scheme Grade 5 £16,440 to £18,471 full time equivalent

The post holder will support the smooth running of all aspects of all in school examinations and the accurate recording of pupil attainment for statutory and in-school assessments. Must be computer literate with a good knowledge of SIMS and Microsoft packages and an ability to communicate and co-operate effectively at all levels, with tact and diplomacy.

ACADEMIC COACH in MATHEMATICS

£13,872 to £15,586 p.a. 37 hours per week

Term time only (39 weeks per year) 8.15 a.m. start

Salary Scale Kent Scheme Grade 5 £16,440 to £18,471 full time equivalent

To work with the more able individuals and groups of students to motivate and ensure adequate challenge, in order that students meet their targets and that any barriers to learning are overcome. You will work as part of a domain focused curriculum team, and be educated to at least A Level standard in mathematics.

LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

£11,391 to £11,968 p.a. 31.25 hours per week

Term time only (39 weeks per year) 8.30 a.m. to 3.15 p.m.

Salary Scale Kent Scheme Grade 4 £15,984 to £16,793

Learning Support Assistant to work with students who have identified social and emotional behavioural needs. The ideal candidate will have experience of working with adolescents or within a school, possibly with ASD or similar diagnosis, and be able to provide evidence of good levels of literacy and numeracy.

All positions require a flexible approach to working, the ability to work as part of a team as well as under your own initiative and good communication skills at all levels are essential. Appointment will be subject to full enhanced CRB check.

Full job descriptions available on request. To apply please submit a full C.V. to Personnel Administrator at Northfleet School for Girls, Hall Road, Northfleet, Kent DA11 8AQ Tel: 0844 477 2525 or e-mail personnel@northfleetgirls.kent.sch.uk

Closing date for applications : 31 January 2010

New Year, New Challenge

MidKent College have exciting one year seconddment opportunities for the following positions:

Assistant Principal (£63K) negotiable subject to experience.

Head of Faculty (£46K) negotiable subject to experience.

Teacher Coach (£33K) negotiable subject to experience.

MidKent College is a large, successful FE College operating on two main campuses in Medway and Maidstone. Our state of the art, £86 million Medway campus is next door to the Royal School of Military Engineering where the College is training all their soldiers in Construction & Engineering under a 30-year contract.

Our recent OFSTED Inspection described the College as 'good' overall with 'outstanding' capacity to improve. We would like to accelerate our improvement agenda by seconding individuals who will relish the chance to undertake a specific improvement project within the College in areas such as A levels, Skills for Life, Construction, Engineering, Teaching and Learning. Whether you are already in FE, working in a school or Sixth Form College, or working elsewhere in education, this is an ideal opportunity to develop your skills in a supportive environment working alongside some high quality senior leaders.

We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups and will meet reasonable living expenses for staff who live outside the area.

The roles above are the indicative levels that we seek seconddments at. There is, however, some scope for flexibility for high calibre individuals who can help us on our journey to be "outstanding"!

If you are interested in knowing more please contact our retained consultant Ken Pullan on 07725 128661 or by email ken.pullan@midkent.ac.uk



MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer

New Year, New Challenge!

We are seeking an

Administrative Assistant

ideally with sales, lettings, secretarial and accounting experience.

F/T or P/T to be discussed. Full ongoing training will be given.

Send your CV by the 1st February 2010 to:

Family Homes

33 Northwood Drive, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4QS
or email to sunil.popat@virgin.net**J G Burgess & Co**Ufton Lane
Sittingbourne
ME10 1JB**Position - Admin Assistant**

Computer literacy essential and ability to perform a range of routine procedures in a busy office environment. Telephone and communication skills required. Team player able to support other members of staff. 30 hours per week. Please enquire in writing only, enclosing CV.

MARKETING EXECUTIVE**£15-£18K basic salary + bonus
(Near Ashford)**

Support local produce? Want to get involved with a fast growing environmentally friendly business? Love the internet?

This is an exciting opportunity to join a fast growing online consumer business Food for Kent. Due to the current rapid expansion of Food for Kent and its online home retail business we are recruiting a marketing executive to support our ongoing operations in Aldington, nr Ashford.

We deliver high quality locally sourced food across Kent and London and require a dynamic professional to help our business grow to the next stage.

The successful candidate will play a key role in coordinating and delivering the marketing strategy, managing online content, customer communication and analysis.

The ideal candidate will ideally have:-

- 1 years marketing experience
- Excellent communication skills
- A high level of computer literacy

This really is an exciting time to join a progressive, forward thinking company. Apply now in writing to info@foodforkent.co.uk

Closing date for applications 30st January 2009.

J G Burgess & Co
Ufton Lane
Sittingbourne
ME10 1JB

Position - Admin Assistant

Computer literacy essential and ability to perform a range of routine procedures in a busy office environment. Telephone and communication skills required. Team player able to support other members of staff. 30 hours per week. Please enquire in writing only, enclosing CV.

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT

A well established motor retailer in the Swale area requires an Assistant Accountant.

A busy hands-on position with responsibilities for producing monthly management information, reconciliation of Balance Sheet accounts for audit purposes, VAT returns, Payroll, cash control and ad-hoc analysis is required.

The successful candidate will be well organized, pay attention to detail and possess good accounting skills and IT knowledge, particularly Excel.

Previous motor industry experience and use of Kerridge DMS systems will be an advantage. A £20k + salary is offered dependant on applicants level of experience.

Applications in writing please with detailed CV, giving a brief summary of previous experience, to Mr Les Knight at Pompfrey of Sittingbourne Ltd, London Road, Bapchild, Kent ME9 9AQ or by email to les.knight@pompfreys.co.uk

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Have a genuine interest in cars and customer service?

Experience is preferred but not essential as full training will be given.

Interested?

Please forward your C.V. and covering letter to
Nicky Simmons, Head of H.R. Waters AutoPlanet, Bircholt Road,
Parkwood, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9XY or email:
nsimmons@argltd.co.uk Full UK driving licence essential.

All applications are treated in the strictest of confidence.
We are an equal opportunities employer.

**All Saints****A Sure Start Children's Centre**

Magpie Hall Road, Chatham ME4 5AZ

Nursery Officer Ref: CA0925L

Grade D1 Salary: £12,787 - £16,440 per annum

Hours: 37 hours per week, working a shift pattern

Our full daycare nursery is looking for another member of staff to join its busy team, working with babies and children under the age of three years. If you have an early years qualification, (minimum level 2), post qualifying experience and a passion for providing the highest quality care and education for young children then we would like to hear from you.

Café Worker Ref: CA0926L

(maternity cover for approximately 6-9 months)

Grade D1 Salary: £12,787 - £16,440 per annum

Hours: 37 hours per week

As café worker you will be involved with the day-to-day running of the café including preparing and cooking food, menu planning and preparing meals for children in our full daycare nursery as well as assisting in making the community café a focus for our community. You will be enthusiastic, passionate about food and nutrition, confident, innovative and customer focused with experience of a fast moving catering environment.

Any offer of employment for these posts will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure.

For further information or an informal discussion please contact the centre on 01634 338833.

Closing date for both posts: Friday, 29 January 2010

For an application pack or to apply visit www.medway.gov.uk or phone 01634 333333 Mon to Fri 8am - 8pm, Sat 9am - 1pm or 01634 332843 24-hour answerphone. Alternatively email: jobs@medway.gov.uk quoting the reference.

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**ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT**

A well established motor retailer in the Swale area requires an Assistant Accountant.

A busy hands-on position with responsibilities for producing monthly management information, reconciliation of Balance Sheet accounts for audit purposes, VAT returns, Payroll, cash control and ad-hoc analysis is required.

The successful candidate will be well organized, pay attention to detail and possess good accounting skills and IT knowledge, particularly Excel.

Previous motor industry experience and use of Kerridge DMS systems will be an advantage. A £20k + salary is offered dependant on applicants level of experience.

Applications in writing please with detailed CV, giving a brief summary of previous experience, to Mr Les Knight at Pompfrey of Sittingbourne Ltd, London Road, Bapchild, Kent ME9 9AQ or by email to les.knight@pompfreys.co.uk

EXPERIENCE CAR SALES EXECUTIVE**Based in Maidstone**

Whitehouse Maidstone Chrysler Jeep and Hyundai dealership, is looking for an experienced car sales executive with proven track record in the motor trade.

A competitive salary is offered together with on target bonus, company vehicle and 22 days holiday per annum.

To apply or for more information call
Mark Wood on markwood@whitehousegroup.co.uk
or send your CV to
Whitehouse Maidstone, 1-17 The Broadway,
Maidstone, Kent ME16 8QX



Beech Road, East Malling, Kent, ME19 6DH 01732 840995

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Primary or Secondary experience; interest in Maths, Science or ASDAN advantage. Specialist training offered.

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Contact Ann Noble to visit.

Further details / forms from career opportunities link on website: www.themallingschool.kent.sch.uk

Applications to Elaine Greenwood
elaine.greenwood@mhfederation.co.uk
by Friday 29 January 2010

Thanet is a beautiful place to work

Thanet is a great place to live and work. Our historic seaside towns of Ramsgate, Margate and Broadstairs are rich in heritage and opportunity. From the multi-million pound Turner Contemporary Gallery, the fast speed rail link to London, and the popular Westwood Cross shopping centre - this is an exciting time to join Thanet District Council. We are determined to improve the quality of life for local people. We believe that by listening to local people, working in active partnership and by being prepared to do things in an innovative way we can accelerate improvement and best meet the challenges ahead.

Committee Services Manager

Salary £29,895 to £35,007 per annum

Under the guidance of the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, this post will be responsible for managing a small team of officers providing committee and scrutiny services, and will contribute to relevant projects, such as the updating of the Council's constitution and the development of a Member learning & development strategy. Applicants need to be educated to degree level and have considerable experience of committee and scrutiny services, including management experience.

Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

Salary £26,940 to £30,738 per annum

This post provides an exciting opportunity for someone with an interest in policy review, because roughly half of the time the post holder will support the Council's overview and scrutiny function. That involves bringing together the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel investigating local issues, the Cabinet Members that take the decisions and the Directors that advise them. A mature approach to undertaking the work is essential, to ensure the scrutiny role adds value to the Council's achievements. The remainder of the time the post holder will provide more general support to some of the Council's other committees, arranging and attending meetings, and taking minutes. Applicants need to be educated to degree level or equivalent.

The closing date for both positions is: Friday 12 February 2010

Interviews will be held: Tuesday 2 or Wednesday 3 March 2010

For an informal discussion about both positions, please contact Glenn Back on 01843 577187. All posts include generous annual leave, flexible working, a 37-hour week, subsidised bus pass, as well as access to the local government final salary pension scheme.

For an application form and job description for this position, please contact the Human Resources Department on (01843) 577175 (24 hours), e-mail jobs.hrpartnership@dover.gov.uk or, download an application form from www.thanet.gov.uk/jobs. Applications to be returned to: East Kent H R Partnership, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3PJ

Thanet District Council is an equal opportunities employer committed to employing people with disabilities. Any disabled applicant who meets the minimum criteria for the posts will be guaranteed an interview.



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For further information or an informal chat please call Lynn Wilkinson or Debi Atkin on 01843 229522.

Closing Date: 31 January 2010

Please visit our website for further information or contact the Personnel Department for an Application Form at Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane, Manston, Kent, CT12 5BZ 01843 823762 or at www.jobs.ethelbertonline.co.uk

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Valence School

KEYWORKER**FULL TIME – Working Term Time Only**

This post involves shift work and to have responsibility for and work to promote all aspects of personal development and individual progress for a group of Key Students. Kent Scheme Band 5

£16,793 to £18,471 full time equivalent

STUDENT SUPPORT ASSISTANT**Full Time and Part Time hours available, Term Time Only.**

This post involves shift work in supporting students with all their needs throughout their waking day, both within and outside the classroom.

Kent Scheme Band 3 (pro-rata)

£14,099 to £15,984 full time equivalent

WAKING NIGHT STUDENT SUPPORT ASSISTANT**Shifts are 10 p.m. until 8 a.m. Term Time Only.**

This post involves working waking nights, and supporting students with their personal care needs over the night. There are a number of nights available.

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Valence School is a Kent County Council all age residential school for children and young people with physical disabilities, complex medical needs and associated learning and communication difficulties.

Valence School is committed to safeguarding and promoting every student's welfare. We expect all staff to share our commitment. The successful applicants will require an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check.

For further information and an application form, please contact Staff Services Department. Please note the closing date for applications is Friday 22nd January 2010 at 4pm.

Valence School, Westerham, Kent TN16 1QN

Tel: 07887 727182 Fax: 01959-565046

e-mail: vacancies@valence.kent.sch.uk

**MOT Technician**

required for local Fuel Injection Garage. We are seeking a qualified technician with proven experience to undertake the following:

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Here at Direct Choice, we're the growing business that delivers great value insurance products over the phone and online. Having been in the area for six months now, we're going from strength to strength and have some terrific career opportunities.

For our team, success is all about delighting our customers. Listening to them, understanding what they need and providing a brilliant service. If that sounds like your kind of company, then come along to our **open day**. Find out how you could help us build the future of our new contact centre at the former Eurotunnel offices just off the M20 in Cheriton, 20 minutes from Ashford.

For both roles, there will be full training, not to mention ongoing support every step of the way. So while contact centre experience would be ideal, it's certainly not essential if you've excellent communication skills and a helpful personality. As part of the Acromas family – that also includes Saga and The AA – we offer a basic salary plus uncapped commission, outstanding opportunities for career progression and a first-rate benefits package.

If you can't make the open day, we'd still like to hear from you. To apply for either of the positions, call 01303 774888 for an application form and post to Roisin McCrudden, HR Officer, Direct Choice, Enbrook Park, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3SE. Alternatively, email your CV to recruitment@directchoice.co.uk. Please quote reference DC361/KOS.

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Account Manager

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Exciting developments within KOS Media Group has created the need to appoint a polished sales professional.

KOS Media Group has been one of the fastest growing independent regional media companies over the last seven years. Its newspapers have won more than ten national awards during that time, including UK Local Newspaper of the Year seven times. Our aim is to truly reflect the important events happening within our region via a combination of quality county newspapers, editorially-led local, midweek newspapers and the page turning editions as well as community websites and online local TV.

A new account manager is required to play a key role developing new business and maintaining existing relationships. The ideal candidate should be comfortable with all stages of account management and should

be proficient at sourcing leads, creating initial contact, delivering presentations, writing proposals, negotiating and closing.

The person we are seeking will be an energetic and enthusiastic individual with good interpersonal skills, strong relationship-building capability and have excellent verbal and written communication ability. They will need to demonstrate a proven sales track record, preferably from within media, will have a good understanding of the benefits of printed, online and live media and ideally knowledge of the Kent marketplace.

KOS Media offers a good basic salary, alongside performance and target-related bonus, plus five weeks annual holiday.

If you believe you are a polished professional sales person looking for a challenging role, please submit your CV to Head of Department christine.davidson@kosmedia.co.uk



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INFLUENTIAL: Ashley Proberts (in red) scored one goal and made another

ICE HOCKEY



THREE-SY: Nolan Boike added to his impressive scoring record

Invicta rampant in win over Islanders

Peterborough Islanders 2

Invicta Dynamos 13

ANDY Smith and Nolan Boike bagged hat-tricks as Invicta Dynamos racked up double figures against Peterborough Islanders for the third time this season.

Peter Vaisanen and Nicky Lewis also got on the scoresheet more than once as the top versus bottom clash went to form. It ensured the Mos maintained their five-point lead at the top of National 1 South with a game in hand over nearest challengers Cardiff.

Head coach Kevin Parrish warned his players against the dangers of complacency against a side with one win all season, and a team the Mos had already beaten 11-2 and 14-0 in this campaign. He need not have worried as his side relished the opportunity to fill their boots against the division's poorest side.

It took a while for the visitors to find their rhythm and 13 minutes had passed before Smith opened the scoring. Even with the deadlock broken the Islanders held firm and were just one goal adrift at the first interval.

The dam finally burst in the second period, with Vaisanen, Smith and Elliot Andrews taking the Mos clear. Boike added a quick-fire double before Smith completed his hat-trick. Lewis rounded off a perfect period with his first of the night to make it 8-0.

The Mos continued to go for the jugular in the final frame. Smith laid on another for Boike, who took his tally to 22 in just ten games for the club. The Islanders scored twice in the closing stages, but Lewis, Karl Lennon, Vaisanen and Joe Johnston added to the hosts' misery.

This weekend the Mos are again on the road to a struggling side as they visit Haringey Greyhounds on Sunday.

PLEASE SEND YOUR SPORTS STORIES TO SPORTS EDITOR GLENN PEARSON AT glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk

Pictures DAVID TREVALLION

Pictures ADRIAN LINE

Slice of luck helps Chats to first home win

Chatham Town 3 Merstham 2

THE long wait for a home win at Maidstone Road finally came to an end on Saturday as Lee Barnett's late deflected strike proved decisive for Chatham Town.

Brendon Cass and Ashley Proberts had earlier put the hosts in front, only for Merstham to twice equalise.

It was left for Barnett to settle matters five minutes from time, although his goal owed much to a slice of luck as his long range effort looped off a defender to wrong foot the goalkeeper.

FOOTBALL

With a layer of snow still covering the pitch on Friday the game was expected to be called off, but a rapid thaw made the pitch playable.

After an uncertain start, Cass calmed the home side's nerves by opening the scoring on 13 minutes, heading Proberts' cross in for his ninth goal of the season. Barnett twice came close to extending the lead before half-time, but it remained 1-0 at the break.

Merstham were reduced to ten men mid-

way through the second-half but levelled shortly afterwards.

Parity lasted just six minutes, when Proberts' inswinging free-kick beat everyone before finding the corner of the net.

The visitors again pegged Chatham back and appeared to have claimed a point with their second goal nine minutes from time. But Alex O'Brien's men were not to be denied and Barnett's late effort secured their first home win for three months, taking them up to seventh in the table.

Chatham visit Leatherhead this Saturday.



PICKED: Kent spinner James Tredwell and batsman Joe Denly have both been named for England's tour of the UAE and Tredwell has also been named in the 16-man Test squad

Treddy Test debut likely as England call up Kent pair

CRICKET

■ BY GLENN PEARSON

KENT duo James Tredwell and Joe Denly have both been selected for the England tour to the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh.

Off-spinner Tredwell has also been named in the 16-man Test squad, but Denly misses out with the England selectors instead opting to call-up former Kent batsman Michael Carberry as a replacement for captain Andrew Strauss, who is sitting the series out.

For Tredwell, however, his inclusion in the Test squad for the two-match series against Bangladesh heralds an excellent opportunity to make his debut, as England are widely expected to include two spinners in their bowling attack. With leg-spinner Adil Rashid missing from the squad, it's likely England will

partner Tredwell with frontline spinner Graeme Swann for the series.

Tredwell, who was called up as back-up to Swann for the drawn series in South Africa, said: "I'm delighted to be going to Bangladesh with England. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip to South Africa but going to Bangladesh may give me a better chance of getting a game because conditions might suit playing two spinners. We have a strong squad and I'm very much looking forward to my first tour to Bangladesh."

Denly, 23, is part of the squad for the first leg of the tour which sees England play three One-Day Internationals against Bangladesh at the end of February.

After a mixed start to his international career, the series will provide the Whitstable-born batsman with a chance to cement his place in the side.

He said: "I'm delighted to be back in the England squad. I'm pleased with being selected and cannot wait to get back out there with my international team-mates. It will be good

to have James (Tredwell) out there and I'm sure the tour will go well for both me and England."

Elsewhere at the club, an advert has now been placed in the national press for the post of chief executive at St Lawrence.

The ad was placed in the Sunday Times newspaper at the weekend as the club look for a full-time replacement for Paul Millman, who left the county more than six weeks ago.

Chairman George Kennedy, who has placed Jamie Clifford as acting chief executive while the club look to fill the position, said the club had already received three or four "high-class" applications that would be taken seriously.

He said: "We have had two or three applicants with county experience, although they are not necessarily still with a county, and one with an international flavour, which is interesting."

The club hope to have their man in place before the start of the cricket season, with Clifford thought to be the favourite to take over full-time.

Picture ADY KERRY

No end to away hell as Gills slump at Swindon

FOOTBALL

■ BY DAVID PRITCHARD

Swindon Town 3

Austin 37, Cuthbert 53, Paynter pen 73

Gillingham 1

Palmer 87

THE freezing weather may have finally relented, but Gillingham's ability to get results away from Priestfield in League One remains stubbornly in hibernation.

A good start gave way to a familiar outcome as Swindon Town warmed to their task after making the breakthrough late in the first-half.

The hosts created chances almost at will after the break and may have felt slightly irritated they had not won by a greater margin, especially after Chris Palmer's late consolation.

It spelled the Gills' 11th league defeat in 13 away trips this season. Manager Mark Stimson admitted afterwards the record was a continuing source of frustration.

"We're talking about it all the time, it's really getting on my nerves and on the players' nerves," he said. "We've just got to go and do it, how we do it I don't really care. The only way you're going to do it is defend properly from set-pieces and hopefully get a bit of luck."



BLEAK: Dennis Oli goes up for a header in Saturday's defeat to Swindon

LEAGUE TABLES

COCA-COLA LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Leeds United	25	17	6	2	+30	57
2 Norwich City	26	16	6	4	+31	54
3 Charlton Athletic	25	14	9	2	+20	51
4 Colchester United	24	13	5	6	+13	45
5 Swindon Town	24	12	5	7	+19	41
6 Milton Keynes Dons	25	11	8	4	+4	41
7 Millwall	25	9	10	6	+7	37
8 Bristol Rovers	23	11	1	11	-4	34
9 Brentford	25	8	9	8	-2	33
10 Walsall	23	8	7	8	+2	31
11 Hartlepool United	25	8	6	11	-6	30
13 Southampton (-10)	25	10	9	6	+13	29
14 Southend United	25	8	5	12	-5	29
15 Exeter City	26	7	8	11	-9	29
16 Yeovil Town	24	6	10	8	-2	28
17 Carlisle United	23	7	7	9	-4	28
18 Brighton & Hove Albion	25	7	6	12	-12	27
19 Gillingham	25	7	5	13	-7	26
20 Oldham Athletic	23	6	7	10	-9	25
21 Leyton Orient	24	6	6	12	-13	24
22 Tranmere Rovers	23	6	3	14	-22	21
23 Wycombe Wanderers	27	4	7	16	-23	19
24 Stockport County	23	3	5	15	-26	14

RYMAN DIVISION ONE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Folkestone Invicta	21	15	5	1	+19	50
2 Worthing	22	14	1	7	+17	43
3 Ryde Town	20	11	3	5	+15	39
4 Walton & Hersham	21	11	4	6	+17	37
5 Croydon Athletic	19	10	6	3	+21	36
6 Fleet Town	20	10	3	7	+11	33
7 Chatham Town	23	10	3	10	-5	33
8 Ramsgate	21	9	5	7	+5	32
9 Herstmonceaux	22	9	5	8	+2	32
10 Dulwich Hamlet	21	7	8	6	+2	29
11 Sittingbourne	18	8	4	6	+7	28
12 Burgess Hill Town	19	8	4	7	+2	28
13 Corinthian-Casuals	21	8	3	10	-3	27
14 Whyteleafe	21	8	2	11	+2	26
15 Leatherhead	18	7	3	8	+4	24
16 Horsham YMCA	22	5	9	8	-4	24
17 Metropolitan Police	20	5	7	8	+3	22
18 Walton Casuals	20	6	4	10	-7	22
19 Chipstead	22	5	5	12	-14	20
20 Whitsbale Town	21	5	2	14	-27	17
21 Eastbourne Town	22	3	7	12	-23	16
22 Ashford Town	18	2	5	11	-30	11

KENT LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Faversham Town	15	11	2	2	+24	35
2 Herne Bay	13	9	1	3	+13	28
3 Erith & Belvedere	14	9	0	5	+4	27
4 Sevenoaks Town	14	7	3	4	+6	24
5 Beckenham Town	13	7	1	5	+9	22
6 Tunbridge Wells	16	5	7	4	+2	21
7 Greenwich Borough	14	6	3	5	0	21
8 Hythe Town	11	5	4	2	+16	19
9 Royal Tunbridge Wells	13	5	4	4	-3	19
10 Erith Town	12	5	3	4	+46	18
11 Sevenoaks Bengal Utd	15	3	7	7	-12	18
12 Norton Sports	12	4	1	7	-5	13
13 Hollingdale	14	4	1	9	-6	13
14 Fisher	16	3	3	10	+18	12
15 Corinthian	13	2	3	8	-15	9
16 Lordswood	11	0	3	8	-21	3

FIXTURES (Saturday): Coca-Cola League One: Gillingham v Colchester, Ryman Division One South: Leatherhead v Chatham Town, Kent Senior Trophy: Greenwich Borough v Lordswood

Gillingham starting XI



Subs used: Brandy (Maher 56), Weston (Lewis 60), Wynter (Bentley 76)

minutes. Scott Cuthbert rose unmarked at a corner and his looping header found a way past Julian and Kevin Maher.

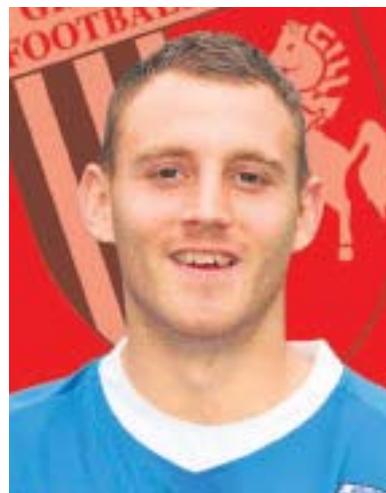
Febian Brandy and Curtis Weston were introduced to little effect as Swindon swarmed forward. They spurned three good chances before finally making it 3-0, when Vincent Pericard was felled by Mark Bentley in the area and Billy Paynter scored from the spot.

Opportunities continued to flow but Town were unable to add to their tally. Palmer had the last word late on, but it could not mask another disappointing trip.

Stimson tried to remain upbeat, but the manner of the goals conceded gave cause for concern.

He said: "When you're defending corners you've got to defend with your life and you can't let people get away from you. It's happened too many times for us."

Last night Gillingham were due to play their twice rearranged FA Cup tie at Accrington Stanley. Log on to www.yourmedway.co.uk for the report – victory would see Fulham visit Priestfield in the fourth round on Saturday.



TEAM TALK

with Gills skipper BARRY FULLER

'We've only ourselves to blame for defeat'

THE most frustrating thing about Saturday's defeat at Swindon was the feeling we had beaten ourselves with the goals we conceded.

You had to give credit to the lad who scored the first goal because it was a good finish, but the build-up could have been prevented. The other two goals were sloppy as well.

We started well and had more chances than them in the first-half, their only shot was the goal. We came out for the second-half feeling confident but then to concede the second so early made it very difficult.

The most annoying thing is we know we're better than we are showing away from home. We're trying not to let it affect us, we know it's been way too long and the manager knows we can perform a lot better. It's hard to accept as a player when you think about how good we have played at home.

One thing which didn't affect us was the break in games we've had. We trained hard but there were a couple of days where we couldn't get together as a squad. Like the other lads I just did my own thing, going to the local gym or playing with my kids in the snow.

The gaffer made sure our fitness levels weren't a question at all and we did a lot of work even though we couldn't get out on the pitch very much.

Hopefully we got a result at Accrington in the FA Cup last night, which would set up a game against Fulham this Saturday.

It's a big carrot to have in front of us and all the players were desperate to win the game, which might kick-start our away form in the league as well.



SEARCH: Mark Stimson is closing in on new signings

in October, makes a return for the reserves.

Febian Brandy is the other clear target and was due to decide on whether to stay on until the end of the season as Yourmedway went to press.

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Gills boss Mark Stimson reveals his latest plans for the transfer window



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